

# LONDON SOCIETY.

JULY, 1872.

## A LEAP IN THE DARK.

BY LADY HARDY.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE TRAIN.

IT was the close of the London season—a hot dusty July day—when Richard Anstruther had invited his friend George Stuart to breakfast at his lodgings in St. James's Street; there they had sat for the last hour, dawdling over their eggs and coffee with other small dainties of a bachelor's breakfast table, and seemed in no hurry to leave off. They had been discussing other matters besides the substantial things of this world, and now were busily conning over their plans. It seemed a very difficult matter, at least to one of them, George Anstruther, to determine what he should do with his valuable person for the next few weeks.

'I wish I had a holiday, I should very soon know what to do with it; you lucky dogs, who have things all your own way, never seem to know how to enjoy them,' exclaimed George Stuart.

'There doesn't seem much to enjoy in 'this world,' growled Anstruther, looking lazily out of the window.

'Ay, that's because you have been over-fed with the sweets of life. Now if you want to get hungry for a holiday, and a jolly appetite to enjoy it, take my

advice, go into the Civil Service, and slave away from 10 to 4, week after week, month after month, and, by Jove, when the vacation comes you'll feel like a boy relieved from school trammels, and be ready to fling up your arms and leap into nowhere and never wish to come back again.'

'That's a sensation I feel every day in the week, only unfortunately, if we do leap into nowhere, we are sure to come back somewhere with the bound and rebound of an india-rubber ball. I've been everywhere, and seen everything, and I begin to think there's nothing new under the sun; if we could only go travelling among the stars now, there must be something new up there. Only fancy a fellow's head getting a swish from the tail of a comet, or getting in the midst of a shower of shooting stars as pitiless as a hail-storm.'

'You're *Nasé*, old man,' said Stuart, slapping his friend upon the shoulder; 'if you'd only got some wholesome duties to perform—'

'And haven't I?' interrupted Anstruther. 'I don't know about their being wholesome though,' he added reflectively; 'but when I

think of the duties I've done, in the way of flirting, dancing, dining, riding, rowing, with variations on other matters this season, I begin to respect myself. "Dick Anstruther," I say, "there must be something in you after all, or you'd never have been able to pull through." London society, during the season, works harder than a London cab-horse, and I don't believe it enjoys itself much more.

'Try Hurlingham for a week, fellows never get tired of that.'

Anstruther shook his head, ruefully. 'The sport's too tame—I've slaughtered too many innocents in my time, and spoilt my appetite for pigeon pie in consequence; whenever I carve that dainty dish, I feel like a murderer insulting the dead bodies of his victims.'

'Well, if you don't like Hurlingham, run down to the Chesters; they've got a charming place at Maidenhead, close to the river; you'll get plenty of boating, croquet parties, and heaps of pretty girls to play with.'

'I'm afraid of my morals, George.'

'Oh, croquet is harmless enough,' returned Stuart.

'Harmless!' repeated Anstruther, 'why it's the most dangerous wicked game going. I look on every hoop as a special by-way to perdition. A fellow feels inclined to change places with those vicious little balls, it seems as though it would be a most delightful thing to be held down by some particular dainty little foot, and croquetted to the other end of the world. I don't like to run into temptation, George. I regard croquet as a delusive man-trap, where a fellow's soul may be caught and ruined unawares. I got myself almost croquetted into a hole last summer—no more croquet for me, and, as for boat-

ing, there is no great fun in that. Who cares to see a guardsman roll from his funny into the water, like an hippopotamus in the Zoo; or some half-clothed cockney paddling his canoe like the barbarian he imitates and rivals in everything but his grace and courage.'

'It's hard to legislate for a fellow like you, Dick; you seem tired "of everything but sleep," as some poet says.'

'Humbug! I'm tired even of sleep—the world of dreams isn't always a pleasant place to ramble in—I'm tired of myself, George, that's the fact; but if I could only go to sleep for a week, and wake up and find myself somebody else—my own tailor for instance—it would be a new sensation. I should like to know what that gentleman's feelings can be, when he asks for his account and don't get it. I suppose, though,' he added thoughtfully, 'some people do pay their tailor's bills—you, for instance.'

'I'm a poor man,' returned George; 'he would not care to keep me on his books.'

'I regard you with awe and wonder,' said Anstruther, leaning back in his chair, and gravely inspecting his friend; 'you are quill-driving six days out of seven, for—how much is it?'

'Five hundred per annum precisely, and I think myself lucky to get it.'

'And I do believe you strive actually to live on it,' rejoined Anstruther.

'Rather,' replied George quietly. He did not add the information that, out of his year's stipend, he contrived—not only to pay his way, but to allow his widowed mother a fourth part of it.—'You know, Dick, we are neither of us boys now; why don't you seriously set to work in some way or other. The world expects something of a

man before he's thirty, and you're not far off that.'

'Poor old world!' responded Anstruther, lazily; 'it must suffer from a chronic fever of disappointment—if I'd only been born with a birch broom in my hand, instead of a silver spoon in my mouth, I might have been an useful, though perhaps not an aristocratic member of the community; I could have swept the dust from the feet of society instead of heaping ashes on its head. I'll tell you a secret, George,' he added solemnly. But whatever that secret might be, it was destined to remain one, so far as George Stuart was concerned, for Richard Anstruther's thoughts flowed into a different channel, as a letter was delivered to him. He glanced at the address—'From Charley Woollaston,' he said, as he broke the seal—you remember Charley, don't you? he chummed with me at Oxford, his last term—my first.'

'I remember him,' answered Stuart, 'but I didn't cotton to him; I always thought he was a bit of a humbug, a quiet, mousy man, and a thorough tuft-hunter.'

'Well! Charley had his faults,' returned Anstruther; 'he did dearly love "the sound of a lord," but then he was a good batsman, and rivalled Tom Tug himself at an oar; and more than all, he was, or seemed to be, impressed with a profound respect for *me*. He has sent me many invitations to pay a visit to his little place in Berkshire, and, by Jove, here's another of 'em—see what he says; and he threw the letter over to his friend Stuart, who scanned it hastily and gave it back, saying—

'I don't consider such vague words as these make up an invitation. "He hopes you'll find time some day to pay a visit to Grove Manor."

'I'll go at once,' said Anstruther,

decidedly. 'By-the-bye, if I remember rightly, Charley married an heiress, a wonderful beauty by his account; but Charley's geese were generally all swans—however she's evidently the owner of Grove Manor—sounds well doesn't it? and looks well on paper. Charley always set a high value on himself; he has evidently gone at a high figure, and made what is called "a good match."

'A lucifer match, perhaps. I despise a man who marries for money,' replied Stuart, loftily.

'Mere morbid sensibility, old man,' rejoined Anstruther; 'wait till some discriminating heiress has the good taste to propose to you.'

'I'm afraid I shall be a long time in waiting.'

'Well, you know, every man can't expect to have Charley's luck—I'm rather anxious to see Charley's choice.'

'You'll find it slow work, down there.'

'I shall give their wits a fillip, send propriety packing out of their household, and, if Mrs. Woollaston's pretty, perhaps I shall flirt with her.'

'Very condescending that,' replied Stuart; 'but you may find it a dangerous amusement—take care how you play with edge tools, you may cut your fingers.'

'I don't suppose Mrs. Woollaston's sharp-set like a razor—warranted to shave clean.'

'I wouldn't warrant anything of Charley's.'

'What! not even his wife?'

'Not even his wife,' answered Stuart, gravely. 'He's a sneak, and a snob, Dick, and I don't like the idea of your going to his house, even with the laudable object of flirting with his wife.'

'And the prospect of making him jealous!' rejoined Anstruther. 'Fancy Charley suffering

under an acute attack of the green-eyed monster!—animated by that noble idea, I'll see about the trains at once.'

'Would you go to-day?' said Stuart, elevating his eye-brows in some surprise.

'Why not?' said Anstruther; 'if you want to test your friends' affections take them by surprise.'

Having ascertained what hour the train started, he packed his carpet-bag, jumped into a hansom, and reached Paddington in full time to catch the two o'clock express. Having chosen his seat, centre compartment, back to the engine, he deposited his bag therein, and then sauntered up and down the platform, smoking in that slow, dreamy fashion, which none but genuine smokers thoroughly enjoy. Presently the small, lithe figure of a woman came tripping along the platform, glancing anxiously into the different carriages in search of a seat, and at length deposited herself in a second-class carriage, just as Richard Anstruther came sauntering past.

'A neat little foot,' he thought, as she sprang in, then, lifting his eyes, he caught a momentary glimpse of a face that looked charming. He seemed struck by an idea that it would be far more agreeable to sit opposite that pleasant-looking young party, than to be boxed up with the hungry heads of families, hurrying home to dinner, hot, dusty, tired, and disposed to take a grumbling, gloomy view of things in general, perhaps with sufficient animation left to discuss the money market, and lament the communistic tendencies of the age and the downfall of kingdoms.

The bell rang, the guard came swinging along, slamming the doors of the carriages as he passed

them, and waving his green flag, a signal to start the train.

'Hi! guard, hi!' exclaimed Anstruther, as he rushed along, snatched his bag out of the seat he had first taken, dashed back again, and sprang into a second-class carriage, just as the train was moving out of the station, and found himself the breathless *vis-à-vis* of the lady who was unconsciously responsible for his irrational proceeding. It may be said they were alone in the compartment, for an elderly French lady sinking into a state of somnolent bliss may be considered as nobody.

The girl opened a magazine and began to look through its pages—the leaves were uncut. Mr. Anstruther offered his paper-knife, which was graciously accepted, leisurely used and returned with a smile, that eyes and lips combined to make enchanting; the eyes then dropped demurely upon the book, and their owner's attention was or seemed to be speedily absorbed therein. This gave Mr. Anstruther an opportunity of gazing, unrebuked, at the lady's face, and he forthwith commenced making a mental catalogue of her charms, and in his thoughts he made running comments thereupon something in this fashion—'Sweeping lashes; glorious eyes—nose. Umph! decidedly snub; creamy complexion; lips, cherry ripe, and red, but too full; mouth altogether too large. She's not handsome—no—decidedly *not* handsome—not even pretty, but merely interesting.' His mind did not long remain in this state of qualified admiration; a smile, provoked perhaps by what she was reading, broke over the girl's face, and played in a thousand arch-dimpled graces round her mouth; then he pronounced her charming, and resumed stock-taking to the



overthrow of his first opinion; he stared at her with wavering admiration, till, at last, he decided that her mouth was exactly the right size, lips dangerously tempting, and the nose that he had dared mentally to stigmatize as snub, the most delicious little *nez retroussée* in the world, and no other would have suited her face so well. Then he collected together, in his mind's eye, the noses of all his female acquaintances, and fitted them mentally on to the face before him. Amused by the fancy portrait he produced, he could not refrain from a low, half-suppressed, though perfectly audible laugh. The lady's eyes were raised with a severe serio-comic expression to his face, then dropped to her book again. He was not given to blushing, but he turned red from sheer vexation. 'She fancies I am laughing at her,' he thought, and felt half inclined to apologise, but he didn't. 'Why should I apologise?' he thought, 'I've a right to laugh if I like.' He threw himself back in his seat and continued contemplating her charms, changing his opinion every minute concerning them. He fancied he detected a slight twitching at the corners of her mouth, as though she, too, were inclined to laugh, but propriety forbade it. He made some inane remark about having the window open or shut. 'It might be just as he pleased,' she said, but encouraged no further conversation, and again became absorbed in her book.

'What hypocrites women are,' he thought, 'she knows I'm looking at her. I dare say she thinks I'm admiring her.' He glanced at the gay cover of the magazine she was reading, and felt a sudden hatred of all periodical literature—'London Society,' in particular—and made a vow that he would

never expend another shilling on that valuable periodical.

'She's taking two plunges for a pearl,' he thought—'I hope she'll find one; she'd much better have been talking to me, than wasting her time on that.' As he was concocting an imaginary conversation, the train slackened its speed, the young lady threw aside her book, and prepared to descend.

'This is Winthorpe Station, I think,' he said, with an inquiring glance at his companion.

'Yes,' she answered, 'I get out here.'

'So do I,' he answered. As the train stopped he sprang out, and assisted her to alight and to get out her baggage, a handbox, and one or two small parcels. She thanked him, as they stood on the platform, and held out her hands to receive her things, but he refused to give them up.

'I believe I'm going your way,' he said, 'and—and I delight in carrying a lady's luggage, especially a handbox.' The girl smiled demurely, and glanced up at him; it seemed rather odd to see a man of his elegant, fashionable appearance, marching along by her side, carrying her shabby little parcels; but he didn't seem to mind it.

'Are not you afraid of being taken for a man milliner?' she said, with a quiet air.

'Not at all,' he answered; 'in some cases I shouldn't mind being taken for better or worse.'

By this time they had got to the end of the platform; she stopped here, saying—

'I really must relieve you now, I am going some distance.' He professed his willingness to walk a hundred miles, but the young lady beckoned a fly and got in. 'At least I shall know where she is going to,' thought he, as he deposited her parcels beside her.

She smiled, bowed, and thanked him again, and gave her orders to the driver.

'To Grove Manor.' He cracked his whip, and drove off.

'Whew! here's sport indeed!' thought Anstruther, as he watched them from the station. Then he hailed another vehicle and reiterated the lady's order. 'To Grove Manor—but drive slowly.'

## CHAPTER II.

### THE MANOR.

The fly rolled out of the station and through the dingy little town, which seemed a veritable slough of despond to him, but they soon gained the open country, and went on winding their way through pleasant grassy lanes, with thick hedgerows on either side, richly clothed in their green foliage, with sweet-smelling or bright-coloured flowers climbing up and peeping out from the luxuriant leaves as though they too loved to revel in the sunshine. Mr. Anstruther's thoughts busied themselves with fancy sketches of his friend's household, and speculated as to the probability of his travelling companion being Mrs. Woollaston. She was certainly going to 'Grove Manor,' but perhaps she was only a visitor, a friend or relative staying in the house; but whatever she was, he decided that she was 'charming,' and he looked forward to fine times at 'Grove Manor.' He was anxious to get there, and inquired how far it was, and ascertained it was about four miles.

'Tell me when we are getting near it,' he said.

'All right, sir,' and on they went, Anstruther's speculations concerning his friends the Woollastons and his young travelling

companion, getting more vague every minute.

'Here we are, sir,' said the driver at last, and Mr. Anstruther looked out. They had drawn up opposite some large, handsome, highly-decorated iron gates, flanked on one side by a pretty ornamental lodge, with the porch, indeed almost the entire front of the building, covered with wisteria, which was bearing its second burthen of rich purple flowers. A wide, well-kept gravel path went winding through the grounds, till it lost itself in the trees and shrubberies beyond. On hearing the carriage stop, a gorgeously-attired individual, in red plush breeches, and coat studded with gilt buttons, came leisurely from the lodge, and, with an air of spurious dignity, threw the gates wide open, and the carriage rolled in. The appearance of the place so far, and the sight of this resplendent creature, impressed Mr. Anstruther with a grand idea of his friend 'Charley's' wealth, but a profound contempt for his judgment.

'What a fool Charley must be,' he thought, 'to keep such a thing as that at his gate! the fellow wants kicking.' Then he looked curiously round for the mansion, but no mansion appeared in view. Presently, there loomed upon his sight a collection of detached and semi-detached villas, built in a gingerbread fancy fashion, with stuccoed fronts and ornamented chimney pots, each dwelling or double dwelling being about a dozen feet from the path, and standing in an enclosed space 'in its own grounds,' indeed, as Messrs. Oxenham would describe it. The gardens were laid out according to the taste of their owners, some were filled with gay-coloured scentless flowers, others were more in a tea-garden fashion, being

ornamented with as much rock-work and dilapidated statuary as could well be crammed into them;—they were all different shapes and sizes, some oblong, some square, some like a band of broad ribbon running round the house, here and there was a triangular patch run in wedge-like to fit itself into its neighbour's land. The houses seemed to be of different sizes and in different styles; there was no uniformity even in their ugliness, and one felt inclined to wonder from what architectural genius so much vile taste emanated, and how they managed to collect it all on one spot.

'How far are we from the Manor-house?' inquired Anstruther, looking round in some surprise.

'These be all the Manor houses, sir, they are all called "Grove Manor," sir; they ain't 'got no other name.'

'But—but surely we came in by the private entrance to Grove Manor proper?' said Anstruther.

'Not at all, sir, proper nor improper, them big gates don't lead nowhere but here; it is the only entrance to all these houses—there ain't no other way to get in, nor yet to get out. I know what you're thinkin' on; it's Mr. Timmins, the porter, as surprises you. I'll tell you how 'tis. The gentry hereabouts—he jerked his head towards the villas generally—are rather fine folks, and likes to see things spick and span, so they pays so much a-head all round to find Mr. Timmins in plush breeches, buttons, and hair oil.'

'Oh!' exclaimed Mr. Anstruther, collapsing at this intelligence, his ideas of Mr. Woollaston's wealth dwindling rapidly away.

'Where did you say I was to stop, sir?'

'Well,' he answered, rather

doubtfully, 'I suppose you don't know of a gentleman named Woollaston?'

'To be sure I do, sir; first house, left hand, round the corner.' Thither he conveyed his fare, and deposited him at a little green gate leading up to a villa of the general style, only it seemed to be turning its back on the other villas; the garden seemed a little more primly kept; there were no fair flowers in the narrow strip of ground, nor weeds overgrowing it, only a few respectable-looking shrubs, warranted to last green all the year round—with a border of parsley running from one side of the bed to the other. Things were evidently conducted with economy and prudence combined. Mr. Anstruther discharged his fly, marched up to the door and rang the bell. A small boy in buttons answered his summons. 'Was Mr. Woollaston at home?' He did not know, he would go and see if the gentleman would be good enough to give his card.' Mr. Anstruther did so, and the boy and the buttons disappeared, round a corner a few feet off. There was a rustling of paper, a shuffling of feet, and a whispering of voices; then the buttons reappeared and ushered Mr. Anstruther into the drawing-room, and left him there with the pleasing information that Mr. Woollaston would be with him immediately. Left to himself, Mr. Anstruther proceeded to take a survey of the apartment, trying from that to form some notion of its mistress; but he looked upon a blank: the room was cold, prim, and cheerless, and bore no evidence of a woman's life—none of the small unmistakable signs of the feminine presence; no little innocent attempts at ornamentation—no knick-knackereries strewn with skilful carelessness about. There was no evidence of

any other taste than that the stern uncompromising upholsterer displayed, and even his handiwork was screened as much as possible from view by highly-glazed holland covers, even the looking-glass was veiled and shrouded with yellow canvas. So far he had got in his observations when the door was thrown open, and his friend, Woollaston, entered the room. He was rather a small-made, muscular man, who looked as though he could be 'good at an oar' still; he had a quantity of light, almost flaxen, hair, and a clean shaven chin, small, keen blue eyes, and a delicate nose, rather inclined to be snub. His greeting of his old friend Anstruther was so overwhelmingly warm as to suggest a doubt of its sincerity. Over and over again he told him he was 'delighted, really charmed to see him,' and shook his hand as though it were a pump-handle and he never meant to let it go. Anstruther thanked him for his welcome and cordially replied to it, and expressed his great anxiety to be introduced to Mrs. Woollaston.

'You've written me such glowing accounts of her attractions, Charley,' he said, dropping into the old familiar terms, 'that it was a long time before I could make up my mind to face them.'

'Ah! well, you know, a fellow generally does admire his own wife,' rejoined Woollaston, with some little embarrassment; 'at least he ought to—but—all things change, you know—and women more than most things. Why a girl will be as thin as a thread-paper one day, and in two or three years she'll be as stout as a water-butt—and you mustn't expect to find Mrs. Woollaston quite "all my fancy painted her." She had the measles a year ago, and never quite recovered her complexion;

but, I tell you what, if there was a show for the exhibition of hands and feet, as there is for cats, dogs, and even barmaids, my wife would carry off the prize. She has the most beautiful hand and foot in the world,' he added, with a most impressive gesture, as though there could be no doubt of that fact.

Mr. Anstruther had made up his mind long before this that his fair travelling companion certainly was *not* Mrs. Woollaston. It was speedily arranged between the two friends that so long as Mr. Anstruther remained in the neighbourhood he was to be a guest at Grove Manor. His introduction to the mistress of the house was delayed in some unaccountable manner till the dinner-hour was fast approaching, when Mr. Anstruther, according to the instructions he had received, descended to the library, a small room some twelve feet square, with four or five hundred ancient looking volumes, mostly on religious subjects, imprisoned in glass cases, as though to do penance for the unorthodox opinions they had promulgated in their early days. A writing-table with pens, ink, and paper, with other odds and ends scattered untidily about, and a few shabby leather chairs completed the furniture of the room. There, seated in an uneasy-looking chair bolt upright, was a lady who might have been illustrated by the thread-paper, but certainly showed no intention of merging into the water-butt. She was evidently some years older than her husband. It was impossible to form a guess how old she was; she might have been forty or even fifty, being one of those persons who look as though they had been born old and had never had a youth to lose or a past to regret. She looked as though she had been

nursed on vinegar and familiarized with sackcloth and ashes from her cradle. She had not, nor ever could have had, a spark of beauty to allure or enchant the opposite sex, even if she would have put it to so vile a use. She was a tall, thin, angular woman with sharp acid features, which mentally set your teeth on edge to look at them. It is as well to sum up the lady's character at once, she was as severely and uncompromisingly virtuous as she looked—a sort of moral animated signpost to show people the way they ought to go, leaving a milestone behind her to mark the way she herself had come—no foolish folly had ever touched her sainted life—though perhaps she was a trifle more moral and religious in her conversation than her actions—some people are. A thin coating of religious veneering looks well, and adds wonderful weight to a common nature.

'My wife, Mrs. Woollaston,' exclaimed her happy owner, presenting the lady to his friend. She presented two fingers to Mr. Anstruther, saying, 'It was the first time she had had the honour of receiving an *unexpected* visit from one of Mr. Woollaston's friends.'

'Unexpected blessings are always the most welcome,' replied Mr. Anstruther, giving the two fingers a hearty grip, 'even though they come in the shape of patent boots and whisks.'

'Mrs. Woollaston won't be surprised at any of your jokes, Anstruther,' said her husband; 'I've told her what a queer fellow you are.' The lady smiled faintly, and replied by some freezingly polite inanity. Dinner was announced, Mr. Anstruther offered his arm, and she led the way to the dining-room. The dinner was served on crested dishes, with a great deal of show and very little comfort. To

intelligent eyes, 'sham, sham, sham,' was written upon everything and everywhere as well as upon the faces of the host and hostess—greasy water was served for soup—the bones of a bloater would have been ashamed to claim acquaintance with the fish—the capon was a consumptive chicken that must have perished in its early infancy—the mutton was a libel on the prime Southdown, and the champagne was gooseberry of the greenest. The juvenile man servant shone resplendent in brass buttons, and was assisted in his duties by a young woman with a swollen face tied up in pickled brown paper. Mr. Woollaston was afflicted with a spasmodic attack of cheerfulness, and kept up a running fire of small talk with an accompaniment of nervous little laughs to point his sentences. Mrs. Woollaston did not seem to be conversationally inclined, though Mr. Anstruther did his best to draw her into sweet discourse, but failed lamentably.

'I'm glad to see Charley has not lost his good spirits,' he said; 'it is never pleasant to find an old friend changed from his old self.' The lady looked reproachfully at her lord and master as she answered—

'A change is sometimes a great improvement—but Mr. Woollaston occasionally suffers from an exuberant cheerfulness that is by no means becoming.'

'You're answerable for that,' replied Mr. Anstruther; 'matrimony tames down some natures, though it seems to have had an exhilarating effect on Charley; but then he was always a gay fellow and a great favourite with the ladies.'

'Oh, I say, come old fellow!' exclaimed Woollaston, deprecatingly, though he rather liked the character of a gay Lothario and

had done his best to win it in the old days; but times were changed now, and he considered a decorous demeanour more suited to his position.

'Oh, it is all very well to talk now that you have persuaded a lady, and such a lady,' he added, with accentuated respect, 'to take you in hand and lift you out of the way of temptation; but I assure you, Mrs. Woollaston, I was always afraid of Charley striking on a rock—I used to watch over him like a mother, and I suffered more agonising pangs on the score of Charley's morals than I ever could have felt for my own!'

'Evidently,' exclaimed Mr. Woollaston with an uncomfortable laugh, 'you've weeded or tried to weed your neighbour's garden of folly and neglected your own.'

'Ah! you put on that air of unnatural levity to cover your confusion, Charley,' said Anstruther, with mock solemnity, 'nobody ever took the trouble to cultivate my virtues as I've tried to cultivate yours, or I believe they would have outgrown my own knowledge, and I should have gone in for a prize, and perhaps found myself at Exeter Hall holding forth for the good of the public instead of being here on the loose with wicked old memories bubbling up. Why, Charley, you're blushing! but you needn't be afraid; I'm not going to lift the curtain and let the light in upon your old days, or give a special sketch of your evil doings—though I may tell you this, Mrs. Woollaston, wherever there was a pretty girl to be found we always knew where to look for Charley.' He looked and smiled in such a knowing way as to suggest a great deal more than his words implied; then he added, 'when the news of his marriage burst upon us like a bombshell my heart bled for the

victims of his fascinations.' Mrs. Woollaston, in spite of her serenely Christian principles, had been gradually growing green, and now she spoke with too evidently suppressed anger—

'I am not one of many words; indeed, as a rule, I am a silent woman, and——'

'My dear madam,' exclaimed Anstruther, interrupting her, 'silence is such an enchanting quality, so becoming to some people that we never wish to hear them speak. We would almost think it a blessing if they had been born dumb.'

'A doubtful compliment that,' said Mrs. Woollaston; 'but I was about to observe that Mr. Woollaston, being now married and, I trust, having his feet set in the right way, might be allowed to break from his old vicious associations and forget his old follies—but I cannot expect you to see with my eyes.'

'To speak metaphorically,' rejoined Anstruther, 'I am still in the valley while you are high up on the mountain of grace; well, I confess I am but a poor sinful bachelor, but by the time I have studied my friend's matrimonial felicity for a few days I shall be a reformed character.'

'The material for reformation is close at hand, old fellow,' exclaimed Woollaston, 'we have some charming society here on the Manor.'

'Some charming and some quite the reverse,' rejoined his lady, correctively. 'We don't associate promiscuously with our neighbours—we are very friendly and very select—poor insignificant worms though we are at best.'

'I see,' rejoined Anstruther, 'and each insignificant worm crawls on its own cabbage leaf and reviles with an unwormlike Christian spirit its fellow worm.'



'You're a sort of happy family indeed—owls and eagles, cats, dogs, and monkeys, shut up together in this delightful rustic spot—you cannot get out without the aid of that gorgeous individual at the gate: he told me "there won't no other way to get in nor no other way to get out," and he keeps the keys.'

'Charles! draw down the blind; those odious Forester girls are staring in at the window.' Anstruther glanced up and saw two heads withdrawn from a narrow window placed cornerwise, which gave direct down to the Woollaston dining-room. 'You see it is impossible to associate with everybody in a place like this,' added Mrs. Woollaston, waving her hand contemptuously towards the corner window; 'those people are atrociously vulgar, I suspect they've been in the patent match and blacking line; I know they water their flowers on the Sabbath day, and are abominably Low Church—so low, they might as well be no church at all.'

'Horrible accusation!' exclaimed Anstruther; 'I go in for High Church of the highest, hottest, strongest, undiluted spirit. "Candles!" is my rallying cry. Candles and banners, and why not drums, fifes, and trumpets, to lead the way to glory?'

'I don't go so far as that,' rejoined Mrs. Woollaston; 'I think there are limits even to our orthodox Christian duties. I don't go far beyond the candlesticks, provided the extinguishers are put on at the right time. By-the-by I shall be very happy to introduce you to our popular preacher, who will be sure to sanctify our combined croquet party with his presence to-morrow.'

'Combined croquet party!' exclaimed Anstruther, interrogatively.

'You don't understand the term. I'll explain it,' she answered: 'you see our private grounds are not very extensive, so a few of us—the *élite* of the place—combine and issue invitations to our several friends to meet on the public croquet ground of the Manor. In this way we have large, social, pleasant parties; but there is one drawback even to that; we cannot exclude our ill-bred, obtrusive neighbours, the ground being free to all, and it is not always agreeable to find, perhaps, your next door neighbour, whom you have *not* invited, marching in and out among the croquet players, scowling like an injured, reproachful, uninvited ghost; it is very unpleasant, but we put a good face on the matter.' Mr. Anstruther thought it required one, and he answered—

'I see you constitute yourselves into a sort of limited liability company dealing in genteelly united hospitalities, and wind up accounts when the entertainment is over—every man paying down on the nail.'

'That is not a very refined way of putting the matter,' said Mrs. Woollaston, 'though it is certainly original. I hope you'll join our party to-morrow,' she added, with a "smile that was childlike and bland." He accepted her invitation with pleasure, adding, 'I hope the Manorians will be on their best behaviour; remember a "chiel's among you taking notes."'

The lady retired, and Mr. Woollaston proposed that they should adjourn to the back garden and take coffee there. It was a small wedge-like piece of ground, like a slice cut out of a huge cheshire cheese, a piece of turf lay like a square of green baize in the middle, and a gravel path meandered round it, garnished with sweet herbs and parsley, which the presiding genius of the place considered

both ornamental and useful; it was enclosed by brick walls, and overlooked in sundry quarters by neighbours who might, or might not, be curiously inclined. Mr. Woollaston called this 'delightful seclusion.' Mr. Anstruther made a mental grimace, and thought you must outdo the 'make believe' of Dick Swiveller's marchioness to fancy any privacy at all. He would almost as soon have been marching round a prison-yard under a volley of hidden eyes as there; his imagination detected curious chambermaids and innumerable boys in buttons dodging behind window blinds and peering down upon them as they walked solemnly round.

'I say, old fellow!' exclaimed Woollaston, in a guttural whisper, 'don't talk out loud, for we are never quite sure of not being overheard—but you really must not go on so before Mrs. Woollaston. She is an admirable woman; a charming woman as you see, with wonderful depth and force of character and—adores *me*; but she has one weakness, a natural antipathy to pretty women. To couple the idea of a pretty woman with me either in the past, present, or future tense, is like shaking a red rag in the face of a mad bull; you would have had your dismissal on the spot if I had not told her you were heir to an earldom.'

'You did not tell her how far off, Charley,' laughed Anstruther. 'Well one ought to get some benefit out of one's aristocratic relations—but, my dear fellow, I'm sorry if I've done any damage—let us go in, and I'll try to repair it.'

'For heaven's sake, don't!' ex-

claimed Woollaston; 'if you attempt to tinker up one matter, you'll make a hole in another.'

'Nice opinion you've got of my discretionary powers,' replied Anstruther, as they returned to the house; and in the library found Mrs. Woollaston and coffee awaiting them. Having indulged in a little amiable chat, and played with a cup of coffee, Anstruther proposed that they should light a cigar and go out for a stroll. Mrs. Woollaston was aghast, and informed him that smoking 'was a vice unknown to Mr. Woollaston,' who never went out of an evening with his male companions. Anstruther saw that he had better go and enjoy his vicious luxury alone, as any attempt to gain the companionship of his friend would be frustrated by his matrimonial jailer; besides, he rather liked the idea of a solitary evening ramble—he wanted to rally his forces and have time to think—he had also a Quixotic notion of sallying forth to reconnoitre the Manor in search of the face that had fascinated him for the precise space of thirty-five minutes in the railway train. He strolled out with a vague, wandering idea of going down to the lodge, and striking up an intimacy with the resplendent Timmins, and getting from him an inventory of the live human stock of the Manor; puffing away at his cigar he strolled on.

'We never know what an hour may bring forth,' he thought; 'but at any rate I've had enough adventure and surprise for one day;' but the day was not yet over.

## FRENCH NOVELISTS.

NO. V.—CHATEAUBRIAND.

**F**RANÇOIS RÉNÉ DE CHATEAUBRIAND is a literary celebrity about whom it is difficult to form an opinion. At one moment we think him effeminate and affected; at another, we fancy that no one has yet given him his due position. He is an imposing character, and yet incomplete. He is poetic, and yet not 'of imagination all compact,' as all lunatics, lovers, and poets ought to be. He is not a manly hero, in any Shakesperian sense; he is full of weaknesses, and in the delicate elegance of those weaknesses lies his strength. He is a writer—passionately enough too—on erotic subjects, but retains perfect dignity all the while; and is as far removed from the ordinary French novelists who write of love with paraffine, or distilled nitro-glycerine, or liquid fire instead of ink, as the 'wild nun,' of whom Mr. Swinburne treats, is different from a ballet-dancer. 'As the cross that a wild nun clasps till the edge of it bruises her bosom,' so was Chateaubriand's love. His nature was essentially that of a recluse, and he hugged his passion to his heart till it scorched him like a brand. Then in solitude he dreamed fever it till he fell into utter depths of despair. Finally he contemplated this despair of his from every possible point of view, and described it all with perfection of language. Besides being the delineator of love-sentiments, Chateaubriand writes a huge tome on the Christian religion; and in addition to being a preacher of Christianity, he has long been to France the prophet of morbidness and the apostle of ennui. This strange mortal also, with a

methodical array of proof which makes us almost believe in him, and a feminine jealousy which prevents us from believing in him altogether, claims, as a poetic influence, to have been the forerunner—nay, even the father of Byron. When we add to these already sufficiently curious qualifications, the fact that during his chequered existence he fought the fiend, poverty, in London, doing translations from the French for very scanty pay; that he was also a peer of France; that an English girl proposed marriage to him, and that he escaped with precipitation; that in Paris he is stated to have been the only man whom the great Napoleon feared; that he flung money away like a prodigal millionaire one day, and was a pauper the next,—it will be plain that we are looking upon a character sufficiently extraordinary to be interesting.

Chateaubriand was born in Brittany, that region of bigotry and old fashions. St. Malo has the honour of being his birth-place, and he first saw the light on the 4th September, 1768. Frenchmen always remember most accurately the localities where their celebrities are born, and so give an air of romance, or a touch of interest, to most of their towns. Twenty days before Chateaubriand's birth, Napoleon had stepped into the world. We can't fancy the latter appearing as a puling infant, but imagine the tramp of a military heel as he came into the midst of men. But even man-taming men are insignificant at one period of their lives, and dignified men undignified. Chateaubriand, for in-

stance, had all the majestic bearing of the old aristocratic régime; but he began life with some inopportune haste and unexpectedness in a kitchen, his mother being on her way upstairs from a walk. There was a tempest of the autumnal equinox on that day. The sound of the storm prevented the infant's cries from being heard, on which account, if it had been able to think at all at the time, it would probably have found the world as inexplicable a puzzle then as life afterwards proved to the man. The child was brought up in a gloomy castle, on the borders of the sea; and the melancholy murmurs of the Channel were about his early years. They seemed to be woven into his life, and the restless waves form no inadequate type of his mental condition—unquiet, unsatisfied, 'full of tears that he could not shed,' as he ever was. He took these breakers, himself, as an emblem of his life; and when mature in years, he was wont to say that there had not been a day when he failed to revisit in dream the austere rock whereon he was born, the tempest whose roar was about his earliest sleep. Other causes that acted upon his childhood tended to make him what he was. A frail child, elegant by instinct, and fastidious by constitution, he was put out to nurse in St. Malo, and for some years enjoyed little society, infantine or otherwise, save that of the small *gamins* of the place, the associates of the children of his nurse. His father was morose, cold, and proud, a man who inspired fear and no love; his mother is described as lively, but she was of the French kind of iveliness, and found equal pleasure in frivolous society and the devotions of the Church. When they met for dinner in his father's house, no one was allowed

to speak a word. Then the master of the house went out hunting, and Chateaubriand's mother retired to her oratory. The children had their books, or could play near the house till supper time. Then, after supper, the mother and children stood immovable and mute, watching the father make a promenade, backwards and forwards, always grave and taciturn, until ten o'clock, in the great hall. Directly the clock struck, he stopped his melancholy march, received icily his family's good-night, and retired; when all the rest must do the same.

This rigid gaoler of the domestic prison died when Chateaubriand was about eighteen, and at the Military Academy at Cambrai. After this event the youth went to Paris. On one occasion, in 1789, his sword was unsheathed against the mob; but alarmed by the popular excesses, he quitted the service on the occasion of the revolt.

Chateaubriand remained in Paris all that strange time before the revolution, but he belonged to no party. The aristocracy, feeling the approach of their end, rushed headlong into luxurious vice. Chateaubriand was cold and grave, and though he dined with them, was not of them; and he did not belong to the people. Perhaps all he cared for at this time—he was only twenty—was the applause which the small fry of literature bestowed upon his puerile verses. Had he been a few years older he would have seen what was going on.

When the Revolution came, he escaped from Paris. The nobility went to Coblenz: Chateaubriand departed for the United States.

The New World opened his eyes. 'Only figure to yourself,' says a French biographer, 'the astonishment of a literary man of the

18th century, at sight of that strange gigantic Nature, full of life, gracefully terrible. . . . Dropped among blue herons, rose-coloured flamingoes, red woodpeckers, Chateaubriand might well smile when he thought of that old French bird Philomèle, on which we live exclusively, ever since the mythologic era.' From travel in such regions of the New World, Chateaubriand gained a certain approach to nature and to real life which the old school of pedantry and classicism could not have opened to him. But the new bright-coloured garment never sat very well on the old-fangled dignity and tradition. Still his 'happy savages,' with their simple passions; and his attempt to write naturally, recommended him to those who might not otherwise have been drawn to him. Béranger, who disliked all borrowing from the ancients, and looked upon 'consul' and 'prefect' as worn-out, obsolete titles, that no one had wit enough to replace by new and suitable ones, was delighted to find a man who, when he wanted to speak of the sun, would speak of the sun and not of Phœbus; of the sea as the sea, and not as Neptune. Chateaubriand, nevertheless, never reached true simplicity. He has been styled a historic coin with the effigy of a by-gone age. In vain do modern manners, literary habits, all the precipitations of the new world, strive to cover the ancient type.

Chateaubriand soon returned from his American wanderings, reaching France early in 1792. 'Atala,' which was not published until some years after, was the result of his sojourn abroad. The publication of this manuscript produced quite a *furor*. We must remember that at that time scarcely any graphic pen had been brought to bear upon life in the wilds of

America. Cooper had not appeared as the pioneer of Western Romance; so Chateaubriand had a new field to himself.

'Atala,' apart from its Indian accessories, is composed of about equal parts of mystic Catholicism and passionate love. The love is never gratified: the Catholicism is. At least the priests seem to have it all their own way in the end; and Atala, who had loved so intensely, and had poisoned herself in terror of breaking the vow of virginity which her mother had imposed upon her, undergoes a most ecstatic celebration with the wafer and holy oil. The scenes of this book are most sentimentally sad; perhaps in this rational age they would not affect us with so deep a sense of solemnity and reality as they inspired in those who were more subject to the influence of the spirit of the devotee. We feel a certain sense of narrowness in contemplating these scenes; we seem still to see in them the gloomy shore that was the birth-place of our Breton gentleman. We do not see the broad world, or any Shakespearian grandeur. The emotion is intense, but circumscribed. But we must remember that Chateaubriand despised Shakespeare, who took his characters from such low places as taverns, and made them talk sometimes only like men. Chateaubriand praises Voltaire for retracting his praise of Shakespeare, and speaks of him as repenting for having 'opened the door to mediocrity, deified the drunken savage, and placed the monster on the altar.' 'Hamlet' Chateaubriand called, 'that tragedy of lunatics.' In return, it has been pertinently asked, what would Shakespeare have called 'Moïse,' that tragedy of Chateaubriand's.

Chateaubriand is rather fond of

disparaging great men; he considers himself, as we have said, the poetic father of Byron, and certainly brings forward some singular coincidences between their writings. Byron, on the other hand, whether conscious of this jealousy or not, evidently does not seek to exalt Chateaubriand. He rather speaks of him slightly, as when, in 'The Age of Bronze,' referring to the incongruous Congress, he says:—

'There Chateaubriand forms new books  
of martyrs;  
And subtle Greeks intrigue for stupid  
Tartars.'

In his notes to this poem, Byron, too, brings in an anecdote most disrespectful for a son to quote against his reputed literary papa: 'Monsieur Chateaubriand, who has not forgotten the author in the minister, received a handsome compliment at Verona from a literary sovereign: "Ah! Monsieur C——, are you related to that Chateaubriand who—who—has written *something*?" (*écrit quelque chose*!). It is said that the author of "Atala" repented him for a moment of his legitimacy.'

With Milton, also, Chateaubriand compares himself: 'Milton served Cromwell; I have combated Napoleon: he attacked kings; I have defended them: he hoped nothing from their pardon; I have not reckoned upon their gratitude. Now that in both our countries monarchy is declining towards its end, Milton and I have no more political questions to squabble about.' These comparisons are, at least, foolish, for Milton and Byron may chance to outlive Chateaubriand. The work of Chateaubriand's in which the largest reference is made to Byron is the 'Sketches of English Literature,' a book written by him somewhat late in life. In the

memoirs of his younger days, he mentions him too. Chateaubriand was at one time, soon after his return from America, a resident in England. He was in poor circumstances, and was glad to make a scanty income by translations from the French, and any literary work that might turn up. At this time he speaks of himself as having been corporeally very close to Byron: 'In his melancholy rambles he was seen passing through the village of Harrow at the time when the lively face and curly head of a boy—Lord Byron—frequently appeared at the window of a school.' Whether the curly-headed boy was actually seen by the impecunious French exile, or not, does not matter much: it may be interesting, however, to note what claim the Frenchman prefers against that naughty English boy. Chateaubriand first draws a parallel between Byron and himself:—'I was destined to precede him in the career of letters, and to remain in it after him. He had been brought up on the heaths of Scotland, on the seashore, as I had been on the heaths of Brittany, on the seashore. He was at first fond of the Bible and Ossian, as I was fond of them. He sang, in Newstead Abbey, the recollections of childhood, as I sang them in the Castle of Courbourg.' Personal as well as literary coincidences, it will be observed, are brought forward by our injured Chateaubriand. The next of these which he brings before our notice is, that Byron and himself—the former in 1807, the latter seven or eight years earlier—both sat under the self-same elm tree in Harrow churchyard, to meditate or make verses. 'Hail ancient elm of dreams,' says Chateaubriand, 'at the foot of which Byron, as a boy, indulged the caprices of his age, at the



time when I was pondering on "Réné" in the shade, in that same shade to which the poet subsequently repaired, in turn, to ponder on "Childe Harold." Chateaubriand then proceeds with his comparison, as follows:—"Some interest will perhaps be felt on remarking in future—if I am destined to have any future—the coincidence presented by the two leaders of the new French and English schools, having one and the same fund of ideas, and destinies, if not manners, nearly similar: the one a peer of England, the other a peer of France; both travellers in the East, at no great distance of time from each other, but who never met. The only difference is, that the life of the English poet was not mixed up with such great events as mine." From a man possessed of such bad taste and morbid contemplation of self as to include himself in such a comparison as this, it is easy to understand that Byron, if he fell under his influence, might have acquired much of his own melancholy egotism. But Byron never descended to such puerilities as this coincidence-making of Chateaubriand's. The former may have had unhealthy cravings for present and future fame, personal affectations, and self-devouring introspection, but at least he did not display them in so childish a fashion as Chateaubriand. When he comes to treat of coincidences purely literary between himself and Byron the Frenchman becomes more precise. 'Lord Byron,' he says, 'went to visit after me the ruins of Greece. In "Childe Harold" he seems to embellish with his own colours the descriptions of my "Travels." At the commencement of my pilgrimage I introduced the farewell of Sire de Joinville to his castle: Byron, in

like manner, bids adieu to his Gothic habitation.' . . . 'In the "Martyrs" Eudorus sets out from Messenia to proceed to Rome. 'Our voyage,' he says, 'was long. We saw all those promontories marked by temples or tombs. . . . We crossed the Gulf of Megara. Before us was Ægina, on the right the Piræus, on the left Corinth. Those cities, of old so flourishing, exhibited only heaps of ruins. The very sailors appeared to be moved by this sight. The crowd collected upon the deck kept silence: each fixed his eye steadfastly on those ruins: each perhaps drew from them in secret a consolation in his misfortunes by reflecting how trifling are our own afflictions compared with those calamities which befall whole nations, and which had stretched before our eyes the corpses of those cities. . . . My young companions had never heard of any metamorphoses other than those of Jupiter, and could not account for the ruins before their eyes. I, for my part, had already seated myself with the prophet on the ruins of desolate cities, and Babylon taught me what had happened to Corinth.' So far Chateaubriand's description, as extracted from his book. 'Now,' says he, triumphantly, 'turn to the fourth canto of Lord Byron's "Childe Harold!" We turn to stanza 44, and read as follows:—

'Wandering in youth, I traced the path  
of him,  
The Roman friend of Rome's least  
mortal mind,  
The friend of Tully: as my bark did  
skim  
The bright blue waters with a fan-  
ning wind,  
Came Megara before me, and behind  
Ægina lay, Piræus on the right,  
And Corinth on the left; I lay reclined  
Along the prow, and saw all these unite  
In ruin, even as he had seen the desolate  
sight.'

Those who compare this stanza with the passage in prose above quoted will be able to judge whether Byron is to be deemed debtor to Chateaubriand, or not. We offer, as a suggestion, that Chateaubriand and Byron dipped into the same 'Murray,' supposing there existed sixty years ago such a guide-book to Greece. Chateaubriand, however, does not take this view of the matter, but enters upon a small rhapsody thereupon, wherein is most delicately insinuated the suspicious circumstance of two persons having made use of the same words on the same subject. He says, with some pedantry: 'Here the English poet, as well as the French prose-writer, falls short of the letter of Sulpicius to Cicero; but so complete a coincidence is singularly glorious for me, since I preceded the immortal bard on the shore where the same reflections occurred to both, and where we both have commemorated the same ruins.' Byron has had sufficient detractors of late; but as Chateaubriand makes it evident that he himself is the inferior man (for would Byron have condescended to such affected self-measurement?) there is no harm in continuing the comparison, and listening to the pretended plagiarisms. Chateaubriand proceeds: 'I have likewise the honour of agreeing with Lord Byron in the description of Rome. The "Martyrs," and my "Letter on the Campagna" of Rome, claim for me the inestimable advantage of having anticipated the inspirations of a great genius. M. de Béranger, our immortal song-writer, has inserted in the last volume of his "Chansons" a note, too flattering to me to be quoted entire. In adverting to the impulse which, according to him, I have given to French poetry, he says: 'The influence of the author

of the "Génie de Christianisme" has been equally felt abroad; and it would, perhaps, be but just to say that the bard of "Childe Harold" belongs to the family of "Réné."'

The next opinion in his favour which Chateaubriand brings before us is that of a French critic, M. Villemain. The former note was said to be too flattering to quote entire: for quoting this one Chateaubriand craves forgiveness, begs the reader to excuse him, and to reckon for nothing praise bestowed through the indulgence of talent. He then quotes from an article, on Lord Byron, as follows: 'Some incomparable pages of "Réné" had, it is true, exhausted his poetic character.' Upon which Chateaubriand, with shy air of patronage, comments thus: 'I know not whether Byron imitated or renewed them by his genius.'

We will leave Béranger, who looked upon Chateaubriand with pity as a superior man who had lost his way. And let us turn to 'Réné,' perhaps the most famous work of its author. 'Réné' has taken such hold of the French mind that the Parisian, *ennuyé* as that effervescent animal so frequently is, calls his melancholy disorder '*maladie de Réné*.' The 'family of Réné' comprises all those who indulge in morbid questionings of life, whose nerves are restless rather than healthy, who find the great gift of existence 'slow' rather than joyful. Such a state as this, the condition, as it were, of those who have not strength to grasp the nettle of life, or health enough to gain a mastery of its meanings, we would rather let France enjoy the credit of producing than England. Let Chateaubriand be the parent of the moping element in Byron: Byron has yet a glory and a strength which are not Chateaubriand.

Réné is weary of all things: of glory and genius, of work and leisure, of prosperity and misfortune alike. Everything bores him: he drags along, as he constantly tells us, his days chained to a burden of *ennui*: his life is a yawn. The fact was Chateaubriand never found his place in life: he was always, as Béranger well put it, *égaré*. He had too much brain to believe in the old-fashioned monarchy, with its inglorious caterpillar kings; he was too great a *seigneur* to identify himself with the people; there was no patriciate in France ready for him to enter, and suitable to his dreams. And so existence became to him an abyss, which something was always wanted to fill. The prophet of morbidness and the apostle of *ennui* we have styled him. What name else can we give him, as the author of dreariness, like the sayings that follow:—'At length my heart could furnish no resources for my mind, and I was only sensible of existence by an oppressive feeling of fatigue and uneasiness.' . . . 'It is much better that we should resemble, in a small degree, the generality of mankind, in order that we may be a little less unhappy.' Or this:—'When really unhappy, I had no longer any wish for death. My grief was become a kind of occupation which took up every moment of my time.' The pity of it is, that there has grown up a sickly family with the cowardly and mawkish ideas of Réné for philosophy. Here is another sample of Chateaubriand's helpless and woe-begone creed: 'The many examples we have before us, and the multitudes of books we possess, give us knowledge without experience; we are undeceived before we have enjoyed; there still remain desires but no illusions. Our imagination is rich, abundant,

and full of wonders; but our existence is poor, insipid, and destitute of charms. With a full heart we dwell in an empty world, and scarcely have we advanced a few steps when we have nothing to learn.' With all respect to Chateaubriand, we venture to contradict every separate assertion of his maudlin creed. Life deceives none but fools; if you pluck a cherry, it remains a cherry in your mouth, and does not turn to bitter dust on the palate, as cheerless Chateaubriand would make believe. 'Desires without illusions'—the very best thing possible. And no 'full heart,' or rich imagination can see the world empty around it: 'tis a meagre heart and a barren imagination that cries out the unsuggestiveness and desolation of the world. Matthew Arnold, and Tennyson, and William Morris, are all, more or less, of the English 'family of Réné!' Let us turn for a moment to another poet, happily an Englishman, who laughs at the querulous children of despair. Perhaps he is thinking of Chateaubriand when he says, in the 'Secret of Long Life':—'To him' (the supreme poet) 'life is not by any means a "long unhappy dream," . . . an idea worthy of a Frenchman or a fool.' Again:—'The Greeks knew better. Their poet was Apollo, the divinity of sunshine and strength, and youth and love. Fancy Apollo in need of "hourly varied anodynes," . . . one day the melancholy verse of Tennyson, and another, the distraught prose of Carlyle . . . one day Holloway's pills, and another old Dr. Jacob Townsend's sarsaparilla. . . . I say that, to the true poet and to the brave man, this world is full to the brim of happiness, and that the future is as certain as the truthfulness of God.'

We have said enough of Cha-

teaubriand's productions from a philosophical point of view: there is scarcely, however, any other view to be taken of his romances which have scarcely any plot, but rely for their charm upon their exquisite elegance of style, and the manner in which morbid sadness is made beautiful by polish.

Chateaubriand returned to France when Napoleon was Consul, and he soon rose considerably above his position in London as hack-translator. His mother died in 1798, with a prayer on her lips for the conversion of her son, whose melancholy had taken the form of scepticism. This longing of hers, it is said, produced the 'Genius of Christianity,' which was published in 1802, a year after the appearance of 'Atala.' The 'Genius of Christianity' was looked upon as something that the weak faith of Frenchmen might lean upon; and Chateaubriand became looked up to as a power. Napoleon made him his minister, but the two never agreed very well. Chateaubriand had a high-handed way of saying what he thought, and found himself ill able to conform to the wishes of a superior. The Breton gentleman never relinquished his aristocratic dignity. When he was offered the 'Academy,' his address was found to be a protest against revolution and despotism. It is said to have made Napoleon ask bitterly:—'Am I then nothing more than a usurper?' He feared the man who would never bend to bribe or flattery. Though brought up in royalist ideas, and strongly impregnated with the old aristocratic sentiment, Chateaubriand preferred democracy to despotism. 'Had France formed herself into a republic,' he says, 'I would have gone with her, for there would have been reason and consistency in the fact; but to exchange a

crown preserved in the treasury of St. Denis for a crown that has been picked up—that is not worth a perjury.' No wonder that Napoleon had no love to spare for the most powerful man in France after himself, when he spoke in this outspoken manner, and threw the appointments offered him in the imperial teeth. When the crown fell that has been 'picked up' so often and fallen so often, and the allied armies entered France in 1814, Chateaubriand's work, 'Buonaparte et les Bourbons,' was worth an army to Louis XVIII.: he was made Minister of the Interior and a member of the House of Peers. This peerage he relinquished in 1830, after protesting against the casting out of the elder branch of the Bourbon family in favour of Louis Philippe. Here again this singular Chateaubriand was dangerously isolated, being, as he tells us, 'a monarchist from conviction, a Bourbonist from honour, and a republican by nature.' Pitt's saying: 'My ambition is character, not office,' has been applied to him, and is reasonably fitting.

Now that we have considered Chateaubriand in his literary and political capacities, we will look at him for a moment in his domestic relations.

Chateaubriand loved to patronize, and was one of the earliest admirers of Victor Hugo. He sent for the poet while quite a boy, to see him, and paid him a very high compliment on some passages of an ode which he had written. The youth was rather frightened by his pompous and haughty manner. However, on one visit that M. Hugo paid him, this feeling was somewhat modified, for as they were sitting together a servant opened the door and brought in an immense

bucket of water. Chateaubriand loosened his cravat, and began taking off his green morocco slippers. Young Hugo naturally rose to take his leave, probably deeming that no hint could be stronger than this. It was not, however, meant as a hint at all, for the great man would not let him go, but went on undressing as if no one were present. He removed his grey swan-skin pantaloons, his shirt, and his flannel-waistcoat—(French descriptions, it will be observed, are partial to detail)—and got into the big tub where he was washed by his servant. After being dried and dressed, he cleaned his teeth, which were notably beautiful, and for the care of which he kept a whole case of dentist's instruments. After this little episode was over, Chateaubriand, greatly revived by his splashing about in the water, began a most animated conversation, interrupting it occasionally to give his teeth another touch with the brush. After this, Victor Hugo did not look upon Chateaubriand's haughty dignity with so much fear.

The author of 'Réné' is described as follows: 'M. de Chateaubriand affected a military style; the man of the pen could not forget the man of the sword. His neck was imprisoned in a black cravat which hid the collar of his shirt; a black greatcoat, buttoned all the way up, confined his little stooping body. His head was the finest part of him; it was disproportioned to his height, but it was a noble-looking, serious head. His nose was long and straight, his eye keen, his smile bewitching, but it came and went with the rapidity of lightning, and his mouth would quickly resume its haughty, severe expression.

Madame de Chateaubriand was very charitable, and maintained

an infirmary for sick priests. As it cost her more than the money she possessed to effect this, she had a chocolate manufactory, and sold the produce to her friends by the pound. The price was rather dear, we are told. Victor Hugo was once asked to purchase a pound of it, and, in his youthful enthusiasm, said at once that he would take three. He did so, but when the operation of paying for it was over, he had nothing left in his purse. Chateaubriand, too, was the reverse of miserly with regard to money. He was plunged in debt, but was always ready to be charitable. He kept a pile of five-franc pieces on the mantel-piece of his dining-room; and whenever his servant brought him a begging letter, which was not seldom, he would approach the pile, grumble, and wrap up a piece or two in a paper, which he would send out by the servant. He was once visiting Charles X. while in exile at Prague, and the ex-king made inquiries as to his fortune. 'I am as poor as a rat,' answered Chateaubriand, 'and hail-fellow-well-met with all Madame de Chateaubriand's protégés.' 'Oh, that won't do,' replied the king. 'Come, Chateaubriand, how much would it take to make you a rich man?' 'Twould be a loss of time, Sire,' replied the great author, who appeared to be quite resigned to a position of impecuniosity; 'were you to give me four millions this morning, I should not have a sous left by to-night.'

A moping philosopher, a powerful minister, a jealous poet, a dignified aristocrat, an honest politician, an easy-going spendthrift, an upholder of Christianity, and a popular novelist, all rolled into one; Chateaubriand is a sort of human kaleidoscope, and somewhat interesting to look into.

KENINGALE COOK.

## TIME FLIES!

A RONDÉL.

TIME flies! The laggard lover, absent still,  
 Compels thine eyes to rove against their will—  
 Roaming from Poetry's entrancing page,  
 To note the clock, whose minutes seem an age,  
 So slow the hands revolve before thine eyes—

Although Time flies!

Thy grief is not because thou must deplore  
 Thy favourite opera's first act is o'er,  
 That thou must miss, at its first luscious note,  
 The nightingale that dwells in Lucca's throat,—  
 Ah, no! 'tis not for this thy tears arise,

Because Time flies!

Alas! to you it seemeth Love's decay  
 That he, who swore to love, remains away.  
 What are the spells that keep him from thy side?  
 What are the clouds that from his vision hide,  
 (While thou art wasting weary hours in sighs)?

How fast Time flies!

Hush! there's a footstep on the outer stair!  
 His footfall's music, and thou know'st the air.  
 He comes, he comes—the loiterer too dear!  
 Minutes—how flee they now that he is here!  
 Farewell, regret! each doubting fancy dies!

Time flies! Time flies!

TOM HOOD.





TIME FLIES.

[See Page 25.]

## TIME FLIES!

B. HANDEL.

TIME flies! The laggard lover, absent still,  
Compels thine eyes to rove against their will—  
Roaming from Poetry's entrancing page,  
To note the clock, whose minutes seem an age,  
So slow the hands revolve before thine eyes—  
Although Time flies!

Thy grief is not because thou canst deplore  
Thy favourite opera's first act is o'er,  
That thou must miss, at its first ludicrous note,  
The nightingale that dwells in Lucca's throat,  
Ah, no! 'tis not for this thy tears arise,

Because Time flies!

Alas! to you it seemeth Love's decay  
That he who swore to love, remains away.  
What are the spells that keep him from thy side?  
What are the clouds that from his vision hide,  
(While thou art wasting weary hours in sighs)?

How fast Time flies!

Hush! there's a footstep on the outer stair!  
The fiddler's music, and thou know'st the air,  
He comes, he comes—the loiterer too late,  
Nearer thou art, and he now that late he came!  
Farewell, farewell, who's that? Ah, he's gone—  
Fare thee well, farewell, who's that? Ah, he's gone!

Time flies! Time flies!

TOM HOOD.



TIME FLIES.

[See Page 22.]

[Faint, illegible text within a rectangular border, possibly a table or list of items.]

## ANTOINE WIERTZ.

## A Sketch.

IT is strange that, despite the thousands and tens of thousands of English travellers who with the summer sun fly yearly southward and westward to the plain of the Rhine, to the waters of Germany, to the cities of Italy, and to the Alpine passes of Switzerland, very few amongst them ever pause, or even seem to know that there is aught worth pausing for, in the green solitudes and Shakespeare-haunted forests of the Ardennes. Yet there are few districts in Europe more full of beauty and of poetry; few more worthy the loving and lingering interest of the wanderer; few indeed, perhaps none, in which the long dreamy days of a late summer time can be more deliciously spent beneath the shadow of green leaves.

The bright Meuse river is fresher far than the Rhine, and its scenery is far less monotonous, for after all, vaunted though the Rhenish banks may be, they are tedious in their continuous likeness one to the other and in their wearisome repetition of the same little burghs mirrored in the same brown stretch of water, and of the same vine-streaked grey slopes crowned with the same eternal grey ruins.

The forests of the Ardennes, again, are even still in certain districts much what they were in the days of Jacques and Rosalind; and are still haunted by wild animals that find there a refuge denied to them in the superb Teutonic woods which are over-sedulously preserved and cultivated. Nothing can be lovelier in their way than the old pic-

turesque towns that the Meuse washes as it flows; than the charming villages girdled with their meadows of deep grass and shaded with trees ancient as the hills; than the roads that plunge down through ravine and woodland, while the Flemish horses thunder along, striking sweet music from their many bells; than the deep purple of the stretches of pine and the black masses of rock and forest that rise against the blue serene sky at noonday when all is still; than the paths that wind on for ever and for ever through the intense shades where only here and there a gleam of light can faintly strike even at the meridian through the delicious obscurity of the impenetrable leaves; nothing can be lovelier, fresher, fuller of the charm of silence and the poetry of the past.

Break from the common haunts and habits; leave the great crowded highways of travel; go to some old quiet town, Dinant, or Rochefort, or Stavelôt; pass your hours in the great forests with no sound to stir the stillness of it all except some murmur from the bees, some clear tinkle from a goat's bell, some rush of water half unseen, some echo of a convent chime far, very far, away; stay there in the long August days, when a white harvest-moon will light you on your homeward way along the pine-shadowed roads, stay there with no book except your Shakespeare, and say if something of the old long-lost mediæval delights of forest-life do not return to you in the Shakespearean shadows of the Ardennes?

But there is another beside Shakespeare whom you will remember in the Ardennes; your remembrance will be also Antoine Wiertz.

Are there many to whom his name is yet as an empty sound, telling nothing? I fear so; he gave his whole life for fame; and yet fame has only shed upon him a fitful and incomplete lustre.

His name is as a planet which only the eyes and lips of those educated in his science can turn to and can name; it is not yet that pole-star in the heavens of Art which every child can call and point out in familiarity and exultation. Is this the fault of Wiertz or of the world?

It is a delicate question; some will say one some the other. For myself I cannot doubt that if Wiertz had lived in the days of Rubens he would have had the fame of Rubens. But he fell upon evil times: very evil times, for an art that is purely idealic and invariably free; and this was the art of Wiertz always.

In the very heart of the Ardennes, at Dinant, the old grey town upon the river, Antoine Wiertz was born in the year 1806, amongst the poorest of the poor, with the miseries of extreme poverty as his sole heritage. Against every difficulty and in the face of every wretchedness he became a great, a supremely great, artist; yet in the century which has seen both his birth and his death, it may be questioned if many beyond those of his own nation, and the sincere students of art in all countries, have visited the ivy-shrouded building on the outskirts of Brussels which enshrines all the rarest fruitage of a most rare mind.

'Comme caractère d'artiste Wiertz est le type le plus parfait le plus complet. Il est l'image,

le symbole, la personification de le caractère.' This has been written of him by one who loved him well, but none the less is it intrinsically true.\*

Wiertz was essentially the ideal artist. His life from first to last was consecrated to one passion, and that passion—Art.

In the days of his earliest youth he repulsed the money offered to him for one of his studies. 'Gardez votre or,' he cried, as he refused his patron. 'C'est la mort de l'artiste!' And on his death-bed, exhausted by physical agonies of the direst sort, his art never once lost its dominion over him: 'Oh les beaux horizons!' he murmured in his delirium. 'Oh les belles et douces figures! Vite-vite! Ma palette—mes pinceaux! Vite!—je tiens mes points de lumière. Quel tableau je vais faire. Oh je veux vaincre Raffael!'

Modern society sees little but an absurd quixotism, no doubt, in the painter who habitually refused to sell his pictures on the ground that if he once sold them he would never again be wholly free, and also that he needed to retain his works beside him for his own correction and education. Yet who can dispute that this sentiment, exaggerated though it may have been, was yet of the highest order, and of a value not to be measured in an age wherein every genius is debased by avarice and prostituted to the ends of gain.

When the learning and the influence of Athens were at their greatest height her sages took no payments, and her schools were free; from the time that Isocrates accepted money from each pupil and all the philosophers followed his example the glory of Athens began to wane. Art is like Athens;

\* Dr. A. Watteau, of Brussels, whom I here beg to thank for his courtesy and kindness.



worldly prudence in her teachers means spiritual decay in her empire.

Wiertz, convinced of this truth, consecrated himself to its dominion with an absolute self-devotion in which his generation saw little except insanity. It has a singular beauty, this asceticism for the sake of art, this self-negation which repulsed all pleasures and all profits that other men deem so dear; and it has a bitter sadness and irony in it likewise, for its influence upon his time may be termed almost wholly fruitless. In the mediæval days of Italy, with Bandinelli and Perugino, with Orcagna and Del Sarto, Wiertz would have been revered, adored, followed, whether to the Calvary or to the Golgotha of Art. In the nineteenth century he stood absolutely alone, and all men held aloof from him; with its aims he had no sympathy, with its temper no affinity; it is full of the 'infinitely little;' of impersonal desires it has no conception, its one measuring rod is of gold, and all its productions are dwarfed to the popular standard; into such an age Wiertz came a Titan amidst its poor humanity. Of necessity the Titan was everlastingly assailed, of a necessity everlastingly alone.

This in itself would have mattered little; he had the genius which awaits martyrdom, and grows greatest beneath its shadow; the unutterable regret which stirs in every student of his life and works is the regret that this genius has hitherto, at the least, been almost entirely barren of result in its influence upon the century in which it was begotten.

'La postérité admirera à travers les âges deux noms flamboyants Rubens et Wiertz,' writes his greatest friend, Watteau. But will it be so?

Justice may come with time; like vengeance, though it halt, it is sure of foot soon or late; but at the present time his influence is but slightly felt, and for tens of thousands who know familiarly the names of Leys, Gallait, Verboeckhoeven, and other of his countrymen, there are often not ten who know the incomparably worthier name of Antoine Wiertz.

This man was great from his youngest years. At ten he painted all he saw by the sheer instinct of art, never having received instruction of any sort; at twelve he engraved on wood and printed off what he engraved, none having ever shown him the method of the work; it has been well said that if at fifteen Pascal *invented* geometry, at twelve Wiertz *invented* drawing and engraving. At fourteen the boy who had beheld nothing in art but the poor pictures of his parish church, heard of Rubens, and knew no rest by night or day until he set forth upon a pilgrimage to the city, which is at once the birth-place, the tomb, and the apotheosis of Rubens.

No one can be said to know Rubens in any sense until that pilgrimage to Antwerpen has been made, but being once thus known, the masculine majesty, the leonine strength, the impassioned radiance of Rubens' genius binds the pilgrim to worship them for evermore. It needs no record to tell us how they entranced and subjugated the mind of the young Ardennais until the humility of his homage for his mighty master became united to the resolve, which all his life long never left him, to create a picture which should be not unworthy to hang between the Descent and the Elevation of the Cross.

This homage and this resolve together chained him long in that

old strange town whose every stone seems to bear and every bell to chime the name of Rubens. The tale of his life in Antwerpen is of the strangest and most pathetic; it may go with the histories of Chatterton, of Gilbert, and of Hegesippe Moreau. He had nothing in the world except two hundred *florins* yearly which the government allowed him for his promise as an art student. He inhabited a sort of den in a corner of a granary, where in winter the cold was so intense that his beard was often frozen to the wall, against which stood his miserable bed, whilst the cell itself was so small that being of tall stature he could never hold himself upright in it.

Yet in this prison he remained many years; peopling it with myriads of his beautiful imaginations, working all day at his easel and at night studying anatomy and chemical science, or filling his solitude with a wild charivari of music of his own creation, which was at once so melodious and so terrible that the affrighted people, listening in the streets without, were certain that the sounds came from hell itself.

Thus he remained for half a score of years, dwelling in a passionate ecstasy of spiritual life and in the most complete wretchedness of physical existence. It was during this time that he rejected a price for his pictures on the plea that gold was the murderer of art.

From Antwerpen he went to study in Paris, thence to Rome; still poor as the poorest and succoured during illness at the hospital of the poor. From Rome, having steeped his mind in the wondrous lustre of Italian air and of Italian art, he sent to his own country as the fruits of his exile that 'Death of Patrocles,' in which

his genius reached its perihelion, which he never afterwards surpassed and perhaps never afterwards equalled.

The cost for carriage of this immense canvas—it is thirty feet in length—amounted to 500*l.*; the Academy, aghast, refused to pay it, and were about to leave the painting to its fate, in the hold of the ship, when a Fleming, whose name deserves eternal record, one Van Bree, struck with the magnificence of the Homeric conflict, paid the harbour dues and redeemed the 'Patrocles' for Belgium.

It was always the intention of Wiertz to repaint this great subject; death came to him with the intention unachieved; but it must be doubted whether he could ever have rivalled himself in it successfully. The canvas seems to breathe the very soul of Homer. The Menelaus, with his eyes aflame, and his beard blown by the fierce breaths of war; the beautiful nude body stretched amidst them, dissected as by a troop of lions and a pack of wolves; the young son of Panthus, who falls beneath the steel like a young olive-tree beneath the axe; the perfection of the anatomy, the life and haste and majestic ferocity of the conflict; the innumerable tones given in the palpitating flesh of the living warriors, and the bruised pallor of the fallen dead; the whole conception of the composition, into which a passionate love and instinct for the Homeric age, has been poured in a flood of heroic feeling: all these together form a work upon which, surely, none can look without emotion, and by which Wiertz may be said, without arrogance or presumption, to have accomplished the ambition of his life—*de lutter contre Rubens*.

Those who go to it, fresh from

that cathedral where Rubens, in his two masterpieces, fills the whole temple with his glory, will not find the 'Patrocles' either poor or pale. That the majestic strength of Rubens can ever find its full equal in any, or his lustre of colour in any, is still to be doubted; but that, of modern painters, Wiertz does, in strength of execution and power of hue, come the nearest to his master, can hardly be disputed by any one who has studied long and thoughtfully in that strange Museum of which Henri Conscience has now direction.\*

That Wiertz is great there can, then, be no doubt: great in the heroical force and the pathetic majesty of the 'Patrocles,' great in the Titanic fury and the voluptuous terror of the 'Revolt of Hell,' great in the exquisite ideality and sublime aspiration of the 'Triumph of Christ'—the most purely spiritual, the most intrinsically divine picture of modern times.

Great, too, certainly, in lesser things than these. See the marvellous flesh-colour, the intense *living* look, the anatomical perfection of the 'Bouton de Rose.' See the grace and the coy play of fancy in the 'Brune et Blonde,' in the 'Chair au Canon,' in the 'Plus Philosophique qu'on ne pense;' see the voluptuous loveliness of the 'Liseuse de Romans'—the soft golden limbs, the dreamy languor of *pose*, the physical exuberance of life, and the subtle, deadly meaning that steals, like a snake, through it all; nay, see even such slighter things as the dog curled sleeping in his niche, and the concierge dozing at his

post; and in any and in all of these the artist is great, supremely and undeniably great: the greatest, one is disposed to say, of any who have arisen in this country, not even excepting Ingres and Ary Scheffer. But with this persuasion of the splendour of his powers, and our knowledge of the unsparing loyalty to his art which actuated him from first to last, how is it—we are irresistibly forced to ask ourselves—how is that the impress of Wiertz upon his own times has been so altogether disproportionate to the might of his strength?

His life was given up to art. The same austerity and purity of purpose which made him, when a student at Antwerpen, reject the gold of the amateur, still influenced him in mature manhood to repulse three hundred thousand francs, tendered by a foreign patron, for the 'Triomphe des Christ.' 'Je ne puis vendre mon tableau,' he answered, 'car demain j'y peux trouver quelque chose à corriger.'

The anecdote is not exaggerated or apocryphal; it comes to me on the undoubted authority of one who dwelt with him for many years in closest brotherhood, and loved him well; and it is typical of the whole tenor and temper of Wiertz's lifetime. His art was his *cultus*, and it was sacred to him beyond any other thing; to it he was content to sacrifice all lusts of the flesh and all desires of the eye; for it he abjured wealth and all its attendant pleasures; his whole existence was consecrated to one idea alone, the culture of the genius in him and the worship of the twin sciences of colour and of form, to whose mysteries he surrendered all the years of his youth and his manhood.

He was accused, oftentimes, of arrogance and of vanity, be-

\* Henri Conscience, the Flemish poet and novelist, whose charming romances have done much to preserve from oblivion all the peculiar idiosyncracies of Flemish peasant and burgher life.

cause he waged eternal warfare against the petty *doctrinaires* of criticism, and against what may be very justly called the pernicious influence of journalism upon Arts and Letters; but, in truth, no man was humbler or more reverent before the true masters of his art. It was his incessant demand, that in the midst of the exhibitions of modern pictures there should be always hung some Rubens, some Raffaello, some Tiziano; so that the aspirants of the present might be able to measure themselves with the giants of the past. His sayings and his writings teem with expressions and declarations of his homage for the chiefs of art, and with his unalterable conviction, that endless labour and patience were as needful as genius itself to the production of any really great creation. If ever there were a mind penetrated with the knowledge that '*la plus grande science est de savoir que nous ne savons rien*,' that mind was the mind of Wiertz.

Also, a stoical indifference, or, rather, an absolute abhorrence of the money-profits, to which art is so repeatedly sacrificed, characterised his career from first to last. '*Ce que tue le caractère de l'artiste c'est le marchandage*,' was his profound persuasion in all times.

'*Tout foyer de conception*,' he wrote, '*qui fait de l'art sublime une vile marchandise est un cancer au sein de l'humanité*.' This was his faith; and to it no temptation ever succeeded in making him untrue.

He was fully convinced that his 'genius was obligation,' '*Je progressé chaque jour je dois donc toujours trouver dans le présent à corriger dans le passé*.' This was his doctrine. He would not traffic in his creations, because

they were to him utterly imperfect; and yet precious to him, as no treasure for which he could have bartered them could ever have been.

Now, however exaggerated this asceticism of conduct may have been, its value cannot—as I have said earlier—be over-estimated in an age whose errors are all in a totally opposite and far baser direction; the very unlikeness of it to the generation which he was amidst, making its rarity, made its value. It is, therefore, the more painfully perplexing, why the influence of such a character has been almost imperceptible upon his century.

Indeed, to behold this noble and undebased life spent in one continual conflict, one perpetual aspiration, and then to be compelled to admit that, for every tangible purpose, it was all but wasted, and that, for any actual good produced by it, it might as well have been spent in the slough of vice or in the degradation of traffic, is one of those terrible and despairing facts which meet the thinker at every turn in life, and make him cry aloud, in the bitterness of his soul, that he must needs 'curse God and die.'

His friend has written that Wiertz will have no disciples; his creed is too difficult; and this is, no doubt, true. Not more than once in many generations does the man come who, to the ardour of a most voluptuous and poetic fancy, can unite a strength of renunciation and a coldness, as of ice, amidst temptations such as brought Wiertz through the silent martyrdom of his existence. Yet all the same, since it is by the numbers and the devotion of his disciples that a man's greatness is best measured, and since it is, above all, by the school which, consciously or unconsciously, he

forms, that every great painter's influence can be judged, it must be confessed that Wiertz, who has left no school behind him, and on whom only the lustre of a partial celebrity has fallen after death, has failed in the supreme aspiration of his whole life.

The reasons are singular to trace, and are not immediately visible. Foremost of all is, of course, the unfitness of the century upon which he fell to receive him, and the ideas which governed him. In ancient Hellas, in republican Florence, in the Rome of Leo X., Wiertz would have been in sympathy with his contemporaries and in consonance with his era. His greatness would not have been relegated to one obscure spot on the low plains by the northern sea, but would have gone forth to all the ends of the earth, calling on men to follow him.

He had nothing in unison with the generation to which he belonged, and but small patience with it. Exalted on the heights of a superhuman purity of purpose and idealism of belief, he had no common bond of connection with the sheer materialism and venal practices of the modern world. Between him and his own age there was a great gulf fixed; he never cared, and his age never dared, to attempt to bridge it.

Seeking sedulously also, with all the reverence that this sincere genius commands, we may perceive yet another cause for his lack of hold upon the minds and memories of his own time. It is this: that, no doubt, as years grew on with him, earnest as was his search after perfection, a certain instinct towards the horrible prevailed over the instinct in him towards the beautiful in art. His own capability for creating what was sheerly terrible, exercised a fascination over him which, in

time, corrupted his sense of loveliness and harmony.

It was something with him in Art as it has been with Victor Hugo in Letters.

The facility for giving truth to the terrific and even the loathsome forms of composition, a certain passionate scorn, moreover, of the flowery falsehoods in which men love to drape the naked ugliness of unlovely truths, has transformed the genius of Hugo from a Titan to a Cyclops, and has made his career in literature one sheer descent from Olympus to Avernus. With the art of Wiertz it was something the same. True, his genius never suffered the absolute decadence to which Hugo's has sunk; to the very last Wiertz was strong, impressive, virile; but a certain exaggeration of the grotesque and the horrible, trenching upon bombast, and a growing tendency towards what was grotesque rather than impressive in terror, can be distinctly traced in the later creations.

In 'Un des Grands de la Terre,' for instance, there is no sense conveyed, except an overwhelming and ludicrous hideousness; it is Polyphemus attacked by Ulysses; or, seeking a subtler sense of parable in it, it is a rich man devoured, in retribution, by the results of his own excesses; but, read either way, in this immense canvas there is only what is ugly, what is ridiculous; the beauty and the power displayed in the 'Christ,' and the 'Patrocles' have altogether vanished. So with the series of pictures which is intended to symbolize the tortures of the human brain after decapitation. It is horrible, no doubt, but it is only horrible, without grandeur, without wonder; the spectator remains unmoved before it. And that this curious passion for

unloveliness grew upon him yearly, until it altogether obscured that aerial fancy, that true majesty, and that poetic feeling which produced the splendour of the Homeric conflict, and the smile of the 'Bouton de Rose,' none can have any doubt who enters the atelier of Wiertz.

Herein alone did he resemble his generation; the generation whose few men of genius, revolting at its sickly veil of social lies, fly to the opposite extreme in their rebellion, and bathe themselves naked in an abyss of obscene truth. Wiertz was never obscene; never even sensual; if he had been he would have been more popular; but he had so far the fatal weakness of his times, that he loved horror for its own sake, found pleasure in it, and took his sport in it; so that the noble tragedy in which his powers were first displayed became, with time, a turgid and merely painful exhibition of fruitless force, even as the eloquent imagery and the burning invective of Victor Hugo have degenerated into mere rant, mere bathos, mere bombast.

Herein lies, it would seem, the genuine cause of the failure of Wiertz to set his seal upon the world of which he was a master mind. Whilst penetrated with an almost morbid sense of the responsibility of the power of artistic creation, he yet neglected strangely that harmonious beauty which is the first principle of creative art. Thus he lost his hold upon his century.

It is only that which is intrinsically beautiful by proportion, by colouring, and by meaning which will impress its own likeness upon the world. All else, though it may momentarily awe, astonish, and impose, will inevitably fail to endure. His genius

had at times a fantastic terror in its choice and treatment of subjects which often amounted to absolute deformity.

There must also have been lacking in him something of that unerring perception of the ridiculous, and that finely attuned sense of humour, without which no human genius can be said to be complete. There are scenes on his canvases, painted by him in all seriousness as tragic and terrible, which inspire the gazer with no other inclination than to smile. A true sense of the ludicrous would have rendered such errors impossible to him, and would have supplied him with those subtler chords of human sympathy without which no man can seduce his generation to follow in his footsteps.

There was another and more practical reason likewise why his later years were, compared with his earlier, unproductive and disappointing. He became possessed with the idea of the new process of painting which he termed *peinture mâte*. It is impossible to enter into the full details of this invention, and in truth it is gone to the grave with him, since he has not left sufficient record of it for any one to attempt it after him; but judging by what he painted in it, it is only to be deeply regretted that such an illusion wasted so many valuable years. Belgian painters, with Baron Leys at their head, were appointed by the government to examine into the whole of the new process, and pronounced it *nil*. There is little value to be attached to the adverse verdict of rival artists; but to judge by the canvases painted by this master the *peinture mâte* was feeble, colourless, and coarse. It looks somewhat from a distance like very rude tapestry, near like a rough canvas roughly bedaubed with a



mixture of paste and oil colour. Certainly there is nothing to be lamented in its loss.

Wiertz considered that it would be of inestimable value to the world because it worked so rapidly. Surely there would have been no advantage in this facility. It is the fatal hurry of all modern artists which renders anything like careful and genuine work impossible from them.

What they lack is ideas; any means which would enable them to produce more rapidly than they do now—the commonplaces and conventionalities with which their canvas teems—would be a hindrance not a gain to mankind.

There would, besides, seem little or no room possible for any improvement in the present pigments and vehicles if oils and colours only were what they once were. In the days of the old masters young students ground the coloured earths, and the mingling of them with the needful oils was all a task tenderly and most carefully gone through while in the atelier and under the eye of the great teachers themselves. But in our days the colours are bought ready mixed, the oils are indifferent, the varnishes are adulterated, and the result is that it is doubtful whether any modern picture will have so long as fifty years' life. In a private collection at Antwerpen the beautiful *Faust* of Ary Scheffer is already covered with a million of small cracks, and before the century is out will, it is to be feared, be almost worthless.

Before the majority of modern productions we are tempted to feel thankful for anything which may efface them speedily; but amongst them are a few which we should with grief let die, and to this end surely the painters of the present day should earnestly seek some alteration in the colours which

they use. Amongst these few which we would fain cherish thus for ever are assuredly the '*Patrocles*' and the '*Christ*' of Wiertz. For, despite his too frequent alienation of beauty for horror, despite the grim and caustic irony which was too often substituted by him for the more legitimate harmonies and sympathies of art; despite the eccentric fancies which have walled up some of his finest nude studies, such as the '*Liseuse des Romans*,' in wooden stockades, which irritate the vision and the patience of the gazer; despite that dominion of the fantastically terrible which gained too strongly upon him, Wiertz is great—by all men of his own times unapproachably great—with much in him of the herculean force of Michael Angelo—with much in him of the lustrous colour of his own master, Rubens.

To say this is much; it is indeed the highest eulogy that can be passed; but it is not too much; for though he never reached by many lengths the heights on which these archangels of art stand aloft for ever, he yet certainly is the sole modern painter who has ever approached at all their grandeur in form and their heroism in thought.

These few unworthy pages will not have been written in vain if they lead any to whom these works are unknown to that silent studio, in its shroud of ivy, where all the soul of this mighty master still lives and speaks to all who have ears to hear.

There are an infinite solemnity and sadness in the wild-tangled garden, in the lofty leaf-clothed house, in the vast bare painting-room, in the brown and white dog that has outlived its master.

None should go to the temple of Rubens without going also to the temple of Wiertz.

The one is of marble and gold,

and wondrous carving and dream-like beauty in the great church of Antwerpen; the other is of bare plaster, and rude timber, and wild foliage and sorrowful solitude in a bye street in Brussels. Yet the two are not unworthy to be named in unison; although no two lives can be in wider contrast to each other. The one passed always in victory, in luxury, in goodly ease, in triumphal progress, in universal acclaim; the other passed always in conflict, in penury, in austere renunciation, in persecuted effort, in universal attacks and opprobrium. From first to last the existence of Rubens was a superb royalty; from first to last the existence of Wiertz was a relentless martyrdom.

From first to last—for with this man, who was denied all peace whilst he lived, death wrestled, cruelly torturing the body, until the mind was slowly and bitterly overcome and vanquished.

On the eighteenth of June, in the year 'sixty-five, he died in terrible torment of gangrene, which poisoned and burned up all the sources of life within him.

'*Je brûlé, je brûlé!*' he cried incessantly, even whilst the deadly cold of mortification stole upward through his limbs. In more conscious moments he lamented not for himself, but for the genius that perished with him. '*Ne pouvoir rien faire! Ne pouvoir plus créer!*'—it was the deadliest agony of the dying artist.

Great tears gathered slowly in his eyes and trembled there: with his last look he sought the face of his friend; the tenth hour of the night was tolled from the chimes of the city; a smile passed over his lips, and with it his last breath spent itself. Antoine Wiertz was dead.

They say that when he lay there, lifeless, the peace refused to him throughout his arduous years came on him at the last; and that when the summer sunrise streamed through the ivy shadows of his casement in the glory of the morning, his face was as the face of his Christ—his Christ, who brake asunder the bonds of the grave and rose triumphant in the power of God.

QUIDA.



## THE ROMANCE OF A RING.\*

IN THREE CHAPTERS.

BY MRS. ALGERNON KINGSFORD.

## CHAPTER I.

GOLD.

TO begin this romance of mine I must retrace three weary decades of my autobiography, and call back to my memory the time of my early girlhood. I was sixteen years old when I lost my father and was left alone in the world, for I was an only child, and my mother had died before I completed my fourteenth year. But I was by no means a poor orphan. My father, during his last illness, having no relatives to whose care he chose to entrust me, confided me to the guardianship of his particular friend, an old white-headed baronet, who had been Pythias to his Damon at Oxford, and whom I had always held in especial reverence and affection. Sir Lorrimer Randall was the kindest, delightfulest specimen of that *rara avis in terris*, a good old English gentleman, that the sun has ever seen. His consort, too, a kissable, rosy-faced matron of some fifty seasons' standing, with white dimply hands of very diminutive size, and a quick mouse-like deportment, was the very ideal of a pretty old lady. I loved these dear ancient people with all my heart, and their two children, Vane and Alice, were always my special admiration. Very shortly after my settlement at Randall

Hall, Alice and I became bosom allies, and vowed an eternal fidelity and affection to one another, that neither lapse of years nor change of circumstance should be able to break. I have said that I was sixteen when I became an inmate of Sir Lorrimer's house. Alice was two years younger, but her brother, Vane, had attained the dignity of majority. He was of a very peculiar temperament, and his physique was appropriately singular. During my forty-six years of experience, I have never come across a duplicate of Vane Randall, nor have I ever encountered again so strange an expression of face and manner as his. He had an extraordinary reserve of character, remarkable in so young a man, and though I believe that his emotions were really stronger and more easily disturbed than most people's, and his sense of honour was particularly keen, yet he was very rarely betrayed into any outward demonstration of feeling, and had an exceptional fondness for solitude. In person he was tall beyond the ordinary standard, olive-complexioned, and brown-haired, and his eyes, the most remarkable and attractive it has ever been my fortune to see in or out of a picture. When I first went to live at Randall Hall, no longer as a casual guest for a few weeks' visit, but to take my place there as a regular

\* The leading incidents of this story are true, but the writer is not at liberty to mention how she became acquainted with them.

member of the family circle, I was rather afraid of Vane. His reticence and grave demeanour discomfited me, his unyouthful patience and quietude annoyed me, and gave me a continual sense of being at a disadvantage when in his presence; while yet his evident power of mind, and his easy flow of language when he spoke upon any subject of depth or learning, moved my admiration and compelled my *homages*. Alice positively adored her brother, and believed in him implicitly. I think it was principally Alice's example upon this point, and the representations she so often made me of Vane's unerring sagacity and surpassing goodness, that first induced me to seek his friendship also; for I thought that one whom Alice held so infallible and loved so dearly must needs be somewhat beyond the common standard of mortals, and as eminently worthy of my adoration as of hers. My first advances towards the coveted alliance were made one summer's evening by the borders of an ornamental water upon the estate of my guardian. I had been gathering wild-flowers in the neighbouring copses, and meadows, to adorn withal the chamber of my dear Alice, who lay at home indisposed with headache, and with whom these children of the hedgerows were always greater favourites than the choicest exotics of hothouse or conservatory. Forcing my way through the brambles and underwood of the cover, parting the tangled branches with my hands, and threading a path in and out of the intricate labyrinth of hazel and birch, I came suddenly upon a little quiet piece of open, a sloping mound, green and soft with the verdure of delicate mosses and ferns, and espied Vane reclining, in an attitude suggestive of meditation, upon the bank of the lake that

bounded the charming spot. Vane leaned against a mound of tasselled grasses, with his hands clasped beneath his head, and an open book upon his knees, his deep, wonderful eyes fastened upon the tiny rippling waves that broke drowsily on the shore at his feet, and the whole expression of his face like that of a man lost in reverie. For a moment the excessive brightness of the spot, all bathed in the splendour of the summer sunset, dazzled and bewildered me after the subdued shadows of the wood. I paused, pushing aside the bracken, and shading my eyes with my hand, when the rustle of the branches caught his attention, and he turned his head and spoke to me.

'Why, Kate! So you've been wandering, have you? And you look tired, too. Come and rest yourself—this is an Eden worthy of your observation, I assure you; the loveliest bit of landscape for forty miles round!' I came forward, a little shyly, and sat down by his side in the full glow of the rosy light, but my heart fluttered uncomfortably, and I was still afraid to look him in the face. So, to avoid that necessity, and to divert his attention from myself, I took from his knees the book he had been reading, and found it to be Spenser's '*Faerie Queene*.'

'Can you read this easily?' said I. 'I never can understand it, the old English is so difficult to make out.'

'Would you like to understand it, Kate?' he asked me, smiling a little. The question confused me—why, I don't know; I suppose I had not quite expected such a reply, or else the tone of his voice was embarrassing.

'Of course I should, Vane,' I stammered, conscious of a blush. He took the book from my hands, and sitting closer beside me, trans-

lated a part of the poem with so much fluency and grace, that I forgot my timidity of his presence, and lost my self-consciousness in newly-awakened admiration of the metrical treasures he unfolded to me. I was charmed—enraptured; and Vane, looking in my face as he closed the volume, no doubt perceived the emotion I had not sought to conceal, and said gravely:

‘I always sit here, Kate, every evening, with some one of my books. If you will come with me now and then, I think you would like to hear others of my favourite poets. Let me see—do you know German well?’

I confessed with burning cheeks that I was totally ignorant of it.

‘Well, then,’ said he, kindly, ‘I will teach it you. Is it a compact, Kate? Shall we read Schiller and Doctor Faustus together?’

Of course it was a compact, and so also from that day was the friendship between my tutor and me. And Alice, when she recovered from her indisposition, and found that I went every evening with her brother to learn German upon the banks of the mere, was very merry at my expense, and playfully assured me that she was rapidly becoming a prey to insupportable jealousy. Ah, I look back now upon that fond tranquil time of my life with bitterness in my soul, that bitterness of regret which is sorrow’s crown of sorrow—the remembrance of happier things. How swiftly the years went by! How devotedly I grew, to love Vane Randall! How proud I was to believe—alas, poor mistaken child that I was—that I, and only I, possessed his unbounded confidence; that to me alone he was content to show his hopes, his aspirations, his hidden labours; that in my presence only he laid aside his reserve, and spoke

out of the very fulness and depth of his thoughts, hiding nothing from me, making me proprietor of every desire, and idea, and passion that occupied his mind! But there came at last a time when this pleasant delusion was to be done away, and I was to learn, oh, by what a bitter experience!—how far I had been from sharing the real secret of Vane’s heart and life. Five years of happiness that was almost uninterrupted, of peace that was almost untroubled, passed away from me at Randall Hall; and I awoke one sunshiny morning in the early spring to the consciousness that I that day attained the dignity of twenty-one, and that the auspicious event was to be duly signalized by a gayer and grander ball than had been celebrated in the old country-house for half a century. There were to be a great many people present that evening, to honour me with their congratulations, whom I had never seen, some whose names I had scarcely heard twice in my life, others who were not known to me at all; but of one expected guest I had heard Alice often speak with awe, not unmingled with some touch of dislike, evinced by the disapprobation she openly expressed when her father made known his desire that Mr. Moreton’s name should be included in the list of the invited for my birthday night.

‘Mr. Moreton, papa?’ she had said, with a little *moue* of surprise, ‘what is he to do at a ball? Clergymen don’t dance. He’ll only stand in the doorways, and help to block up the entrances!’

But Sir Lorrimer had insisted upon the despatch of the invitation in question, and Mr. Moreton, to Alice’s profound astonishment, wrote an acceptance in feyly. I was flushed with excitement and

expectancy when I entered the brilliantly-lighted drawing-rooms that night. And the knowledge of my own beauty, though it was none of the rarest, was unutterably delightful to me. I floated through the night in a sort of dreamy ecstatic gladness; I danced, as it seemed to me, upon clouds of lightness, my heart beat joyously with a sense of something akin to triumph. Vane never danced much, but he waltzed twice that evening with me, and I said to myself that if it had not been *with me* he would not have danced at all. There was infinite gratification in the thought, and the colour burned brighter in my cheeks as I rested my hand on his shoulder, and plunged for the second time under his piloting into the sweet reckless delirium of my favourite *deux temps*. I saw Mr. Moreton several times during the evening, and I learned from Alice that her father had made arrangements for him to sleep at the Hall, as he was going in a few days to his rectory near London, and Sir Lorrimer and he were old friends, and had not met for some years.

'But, Ally,' I remonstrated, 'is he going to stay in this house till he starts for London? Won't that be rather a nuisance?' Alice pouted and shook her pretty head in self-exculpation. 'I know nothing about it,' she said; 'don't ask me! Oh, what a tiresome thing though, Katie?' Then she gave her hand to the gentleman who came to claim her for the next dance, and they went whirling away together down the long bright room.

But the Reverend Charles Moreton *did* stay at Lorrimer Hall for more than a week; and though I could not quite make up my mind to like him—it seemed somehow disloyal to Alice to admire any one she depreciated—I could not

but admit to my own conscience that his manner was gentle and pleasant; and though I daresay Alice would have indignantly repudiated the notion that he had any pretensions to beauty of person, he was at least agreeable to look at, and the tones of his voice were incontrovertibly soft and melodious. He was a much older man than Vane, probably by some fourteen or sixteen years, but I thought he assumed too much of the patron towards my *cher ami*, and I was proportionately indignant, and should no doubt have taken some method of openly expressing my ire on the subject, if Vane himself had only betrayed the least resentment towards the man, whom with some strange unaccountable feeling of presentiment, I could not help regarding in the light of an intruder and supplanter.

We saw a great deal of Mr. Moreton after the ball. He held two livings, one near London, and one in the midland counties, which had recently fallen into his possession; and on his journeys to and fro he frequently rested two or three days at Randall Hall.

He was with us once in the early autumn, just as the leaves began to change their summer brightness for more sober shades, and I remember that the season was an unusually hot and sultry one. This time he had stayed longer at the Hall than on any previous visit—almost a fortnight, and on the evening before the day fixed for his departure, Alice and he and I had spent a good half-hour beneath a big cedar-tree on the lawn, discussing church politics and parochial management. But Vane, finding himself unbearably bored, sauntered away with an excuse, and Alice herself was soon after summoned by the housekeeper to lend the light of



her countenance to some domestic arrangement indoors. It came to pass, therefore, that my guardian's guest and I were left alone, and I, possessing very few conversational powers, and being aware of my deficiency on that head, was fain to propose a tour through the garden alleys and the shrubbery. Suddenly, when we were in the very midst of the shrubbery, Mr. Moreton stood still and faced me.

'Miss Brandiscombe,' he said, with strange abruptness, 'you know that I am not a young man?'

I was taken horribly aback by this embarrassing piece of intelligence, pointed as it was with an interrogatory emphasis; but I did my best in the emergency of the moment to unite the principle of abstract truth with my own sense of personal politeness.

'I don't think you are very *old*,' I said, with an airy laugh. But he corrected that levity on the instant.

'Nor a poor man?' he added, in the same tone of inquiry. I lifted my eyes to his in alarmed silence, and mutely gave the affirmation he desired. 'I have known Sir Lorrimer Vane Randall almost all my life,' said he, taking both my hands into his, 'and there are few things connected with my circumstances and career which are unfamiliar to him. I believe he has an esteem and attachment for me. Certainly I regard him with feelings of the sincerest friendship.' There he paused, and seemed to be again expecting some pertinent observation, but nothing at all appropriate suggested itself to me. So I coloured high, and still preserved a sagacious silence.

'Perhaps you guess already,' he continued, looking earnestly at me, 'my motives for reminding you of these things.

It is that you may not think I deal unfairly with you, or dishonourably towards the gentleman who has so long been your guardian and our mutual friend, by preferring the request I have resolved upon. Miss Brandiscombe—Kate—I am sure that I ask you to do nothing likely to displease Sir Lorrimer in entreating you to make me happy—to give me the title to protect and adore you—to be my wife.

He was actually in earnest! I dropped my eyes, and felt the crimson blood flaming hotly from my throat to my temples. In a moment a hundred swift-winged thoughts, reminiscences, and anticipations crowded into my mind, overwhelming and confusing the voice of my heart. Vanity, self-conceit, the desire of glorification—these were the baneful demons busiest with the shaping of my future at that terrible instant. I reflected that I was now past twenty-one, that, being very pretty, I ought no longer to remain boxed up in this country domicile of my ex-guardian's, surrounded only by gamekeepers and serving men, and exhibited occasionally only at a county dinner or a hunt ball. I knew that this man who now desired to marry me, after having passed forty years in the world unconquered by any woman, was looked upon as invulnerable, indomitable, and yet he had confessed himself my captive! What would be said of such a splendid conquest? Little Kate Brandiscombe leading the erudite, the *savant*, the cynical, the magnificent Charles Moreton in fetters! How the affair would astonish Sir Lorrimer! and please him, too, no doubt, as Mr. Moreton had said it would. Perhaps, already Sir Lorrimer knew of his friend's intention. And Alice—what would *she* say? Vane—

There a cold shiver seized me, my heart recoiled in my bosom, and I felt as though the soft August atmosphere had suddenly become an icy wind. I stood silent, unable to speak the words that would tear me asunder so irreparably from *him*, that would destroy so utterly a hope of whose existence in my soul I had been unconscious till that very moment. It is not until we stand on the point of losing for ever the possible fulfilment of our desire, that we comprehend how much the desire itself was part of our being.

Charles Moreton's musical voice broke in upon the thoughts that tore my heart so sorely.

'Dear Kate, is it to be "Yes" or "No?" Will you let me be your husband?'

Vane! Vane! The dear familiar name ran through my soul, like the death-cry of that terrible Hope dying in its birth. Ought I not to be ashamed of myself—ashamed of my weakness—ashamed of such unmaidenly, unsolicited, unrequited love? I had been taught that 'Women should be wooed, and not unsought be won;' and, I believed it to be decenter and better for a girl to marry where she could feel little affection, than so to forget herself as to love where she could not marry. And so I accepted the escape that Providence seemed to be offering me; I crushed the natural morality born within me under the iron of the artificial morality I had learned in the world; I sacrificed the first-fruits of my heart to the idol of a false idea;—other women have done the same things since, often and over again. I gave the promise that Charles Moreton had asked of me, and I thought that in doing it I did well, since I could never be the wife of Vane Randall. *Never!*

But from the hour I pledged

myself and my honour thus, there seemed to come a change over the still quiet eventide, and all the shrubbery about us was astir with an awakened sobbing wind. Bough on bough swirled and sighed around, and here and there some light crispy leaf, withered by the touch of autumn, fell quivering from the rustling canopy overhead, and lay motionless and death-like upon the gravel at my feet. I passed out into another world, out into another life, with the man to whom I had promised all my future, the man who was my chosen husband, henceforth to be my sole guide and closest companion till the end.

Hardly had we quitted the shadow of the grove, when I perceived Alice hastening towards us. I could not meet her smiling happy face at that moment, and I felt that her merry laughter and light talk would break my heart. So I made a hasty excuse for deserting Mr. Moreton, and, promising a speedy return, I turned away from him and sped back into the shrubbery. But the next minute I heard Alice calling me, and fearing that I should be followed and captured either by her or by Charles Moreton himself, I ran breathlessly down a narrow cross-path leading to the banks of the mere, whither I did not think it likely any one would be at the trouble to pursue me. But the intricate maze of small winding byways and my own discomfiture of mind bewrayed my steps, and I plunged by mistake into the coppice below the lake where I had gathered the wild flowers for Alice on the day of my first *tête-à-tête* with her brother. I remembered the spot—I remembered the whole circumstances of that bygone evening, the brightness of the sunlight, the feelings of my heart, the beauty of the poem he made me

understand then for the first time! Mechanically I sought and found the opening in the low brushwood and bracken that led to the mere. But when I stepped out of the coppice on to the open rising ground, and fronted the full glory of the swooning westward sun, my heart leapt with a great leap into my throat, and the turf seemed unsteady beneath me, for there—as though that lost day of the Past were indeed restored—there, by that identical knoll of tufted grasses, his book lying open upon his knees, and his dear grave face turned towards the sunset, sat my darling, my friend Vane Randall! And when he saw me he rose and made me welcome, as he always did, laying his book aside, and as I drew near I looked down at it and saw that it was indeed the 'Faerie Queene.' 'Katie, dear, you are trembling—what is the matter?—what has happened?' Then I laid my arms about his neck, and buried my head upon them, and told him that I was engaged to be married to Charles Moreton, that he loved me and that I loved him, and that he was gone to tell my guardian about it now. And after I had told him I fell to crying like the child that I was, my face still resting upon his shoulder, hiding and nestling there where I had so often fled to seek sympathy and comfort before in far lighter cares than this. Ah me! how much lighter and more evanescent!

But after a little while, when I found that my friend let me sob on in silence, and said not a word to this great piece of news, I turned myself slowly in his embrace and looked at him, wondering why he did not speak. God pity me! even now I seem to see it all again as I saw it then—the white quivering lips, the eyes benumbed as in a dream, the dear

terrible face that looked no longer like the face of Vane, but like an image of it carven in marble! My sobs died suddenly, choked to silence by the new horror that seized me, and a fierce unwonted pain like the touch of fire caught my breath midway in my throat, and sapped up the tears that had been ready to fall from my eyes.

'Forgive me, Kate!' said he, at last. 'I wish you to be very happy, dear,—but—I had thought you loved me more than him, and I hoped to have made you my wife this year. But it's over now, Katie; and though I can't help telling you, don't let any one else know about it;—we've been playing a game of cross-questions together, dear, and I've got my crooked answer—that's all.'

Through the dreadful silence his words, sharp and distinct in their low measured utterance, fell upon my heart,—words that I have heard through more than twenty-five years since that autumn evening, reviving, like a constant haunting presence, a ghostly regret for the life they blighted,—the life *that might have been*; a weary unsatisfied yearning over the glory of youth and womanhood that perished at that bitter going down of the sun.

And as I looked up again I saw that the sun had gone down, and the gold of my life had gone with it. For me, henceforth, the gray had begun.

## CHAPTER II.

GRAY.

That evening seemed to me to have no end. While I was dressing for dinner, Alice came into my room and sat down by the toilette table, as it was her custom to do; but I felt that it would be impossible to support any sort of con-

versation with her then, and I could not conceal my swollen eyelids and the disorder of my mind. But Alice did not seem at all surprised. She looked at me kindly, and drawing down my face to hers, told me, with a kiss, that she knew all about it, for Mr. Moreton had already told her and my guardian; that she hoped I should be very very happy, and that I mustn't cry. 'But, Katie,' she added, with one of her discontented little grimaces, 'do you know I'm not quite sure that I shan't cry. I had no idea it was Charles Moreton you liked! Shall I tell you what I thought and hoped?—and now you've spoilt it all!'

I could not speak, for at the moment that strange sensation which most people seem to experience at certain seasons pervaded my mind, and I felt with a curious certainty that I already knew the words she was going to say, and that I could not hinder her from saying them.

'Well, then,' said Alice after a little pause of hesitation, 'I thought it was Vane that you liked, and I said to myself and to papa that you two would marry in the end; and papa believed the same, I know; for when I first told him what I fancied about it he pinched my cheek and laughed, and said he didn't think me a very remarkable prophet, for he was clever enough to see as much as I did in that particular direction! And, of course, now that you are really engaged to somebody else, you won't mind my saying that I am a little disappointed—will you? Because I always promised myself that you were going to be my sister in good earnest some day.'

Again I could not answer her. I only had sown my own misery then, and I had to reap my harvest

of bitterness in silence. To think that after all that very Hope had been the hope of my guardian and of Alice, and of Vane himself, and that I—I had destroyed and ruined it in my fatal haste to be married! To think that happiness—*such* happiness would have come so easily to me if I had only waited for it perhaps a few days longer, and that everybody was ready to rejoice at my gladness! To think that the sweet fruit had been so near my lips, and that I, in my blindness and folly, had voluntarily thrust it away! And then to hear Alice's qualified felicitations on my terrible blunder, and to be told that she was disappointed in my choice! Disappointed! *She!*

How I wept that night! How I sobbed and moaned and sighed out the dull creeping hours from midnight until dawn! How I hated the returning light and my own life, and the pitiless, heartless sun that *would* rise again and make a new day!

But I never breathed a word of my distress to Alice; I never betrayed myself to Vane; I never resented a kiss nor a word of caress from Charles Moreton. My guardian plainly was a little surprised at the engagement, but he made no allusion to his son, nor hinted at the existence of the disappointment Alice had expressed so openly. Then came the eve of my wedding day, and with it, Vane, who had been in London for some weeks, returned to the Hall. It was very late when he arrived, and Alice had already bidden me good-night and was preparing to retire to bed. But when I heard Vane come into the house, I was seized with so strong a desire to see and speak to him, that instead of going directly to my bedroom, I ran down the stairs and encountered him in the dim-lighted hall.

At the sound of my footstep he looked up and greeted me with a smile.

'Ah, Katie!' said he, 'I'm glad you're there—I have something to show you. And you'll be in such general requisition in the morning that I shan't be able to get near you; so I'll take the chance that Providence gives me, and make the most of the present. Smithers, where is there a lamp burning?'

'In the dining-room, if you please, sir.'

I followed Vane into the great empty room, with its grim oaken wainscoting and faded ancestral portraits hanging on the walls.

Vane took a tiny velvet *étui* from his vest and opened it before me. It contained a gold ring of three separate circles, made in the semblance of a snake, and upon the crest of the head was set one large diamond of the first water, an amazing gem both for size and lustre.

'This is my present to you for to-morrow, Katie. You must wear it as a guard above your wedding ring. There is something written inside, you see, so that you mayn't forget me by-and-by.'

He held the jewel beneath the lamp as he spoke, and the light fell full upon the inside of the coils. I read this inscription graven there:

*'Vane Randall gives this, with himself, to Kate Brandiscombe.'*

I could not read it twice for the tears that blinded me. I could only hold the dear giver to my heart, and let him take my thanks in the passionate silence of a last embrace. Oh, if even then he could have known how I suffered for his sake! If even then he could have guessed how wildly I loved him! That night I was nearer to telling him the truth than I had ever been before, for I saw that his love was not abated

towards me, I knew that I was his darling still. Would it have been better for us, better for him, if I had spoken then, I wonder?

As I laid the jewel in its velvet case I looked again at the inscription within it, and noticed that it was not my married name that was engraven there, though the ring itself was a wedding gift.

'Why did you not,' said I, 'write Kate Moreton instead of the maiden name I shall forego to-morrow?'

'I have never known Kate Moreton,' he answered, in a low, sorrowful voice. 'It is Kate Brandiscombe that I have loved, it is Kate Brandiscombe that I shall carry about in my heart all my life. And whenever she thinks of me I want her to be Kate Brandiscombe again, that my ring may be to her not only a "goodly ornament," but an "endlesse monument" of the past.'

He too, then, must have been thinking of the 'Epithalamion.'

I was married to Charles Moreton upon the *twenty-fifth of October, eighteen hundred and forty-five*. And upon that day, after I had returned from the church with my new-made husband, Vane himself added his golden serpent to the single coil of the wedding ring already upon my finger. For I would wear no other guard than this gift of Vane's, and I would suffer no hand but his to put it on. And he, bending over me as I gazed at the shining circles, murmured:

'There are three coils, Katie—that is the magic number, you know, and the full elaboration and perfect complement of three is nine; three ones of threes, trinity in unity thrice demonstrated. Let the diamond on the serpent's crest stand for the adamant of our

friendship—the indissoluble bond between us—and the allegory is complete!

'Ah, Vane,' said I, 'what result may not nine years bring to that precious friendship?'

No one was attending to us—we stood apart from the guests, and the chiffonier, groaning beneath the weight of my costly wedding gifts, was the centre of the general attraction. Vane glanced rapidly across the room, and then, fixing his wonderful scintillating eyes upon my face; 'Katie,' said he, with unwonted earnestness, 'something impresses me to make you a very foolish request. Keep this ring untouched where I have put it. I shall like to think when we are parted that you have never moved it from your finger since this day, and that where I left it, there it remains.'

'Vane,' I answered, all my heart upon my lips, 'it shall never be moved from my finger until you draw it off yourself.' Then a sudden thought struck upon my mind, and I added hastily, 'But, oh, Vane, suppose I lose the diamond—the symbol of our friendship? What shall I do then?'

And he answered me, '*If you lose that, Katie, I will send you another gift to replace it.*'

### CHAPTER III.

#### SABLE.

Very shortly after the return of my husband and myself from the Continent, where we had spent our honeymoon, and just as I was beginning to settle down in my new home, I heard from Alice that Vane had entered the army.

'After your marriage, Katie,' wrote my naïve correspondent, 'Vane seemed to grow quite different. He became more specula-

tive than ever, but instead of being tranquil and serene over his speculations, as he used to be, he turned excitable and restless. You may think how surprised we were to hear him say one day that he was tired of his quiet life, and must have some active profession, something that would stir up his energy, and take him into adventure and commotion, if possible—into danger. Papa laughed at him, and suggested that the season for fox-hunting had set in already; but I knew what Vane was hinting at, and what he meant to do. So I was not surprised when he told us very calmly last Saturday that the preliminaries were concluded, and that he had "got a mount for her Majesty's pack." I think it's in the Lancers. Write to him, Katie; I know he would like to hear from you.'

I wrote as she suggested, and Vane would have come to see me, but I feared that if he did I might betray myself before my husband. So I sent Vane an excuse, and with the letter went also a *gage d'amitié* I had prepared for him, and which I was sure he would appreciate and value as dearly as I did his ring. My present was a double locket of plain dead gold, containing in the interior of one fold my own portrait, enamelled upon ivory, and bearing on the inner part of the fold, opposite the picture, this single line, traced in the tiniest of seed pearls:

*'For short time an endless monument.'*

Time went on very calmly and placidly with me at the rectory, and Charles and I were as happy together as any one could reasonably have expected, considering the disparity of our ages: certainly we were much happier than I had believed it possible for such a marriage to make us. I did not



see so much of Alice as I had hoped to do, for Randall Hall was quite in the midst of England, but we often exchanged epistolary greetings, and our friendship remained as warm and unalterable as ever. Alice would not marry. Three years after my marriage, Lady Randall, whose feeble health had long before made her a non-entity in the household affairs, died, and my friend loved Sir Lorrimer too dearly to be able to leave him alone, now that Vane no longer resided in the old place. It was Alice's mission to be a good daughter, and she performed her duty with earnest devotion and willing love.

Time is a wonderfully skilful healer of mental disorders, and he was a good doctor to me. But I was sorry for my husband's sake that we had no child. More than eight years of my gray married life passed away, and no baby came to gladden the house and wake the mother's heart in my bosom; no tiny voice babbled in the great luxurious rooms where I sat day after day entertaining my visitors or presiding at my husband's table; no little-pattering footsteps disturbed the aching silence of the heavy-carpeted staircase and the long marble corridors.

I taught myself to believe at last that the blessing women covet and prize so much was denied to me, and that in this crowning joy of happy wives and solace of sad ones, I should not be suffered to partake. But Providence meant more kindly, and decreed that though it was not for me to have a child upon earth, I should have one in heaven.

Early in the summer of 1854, a little son was born to me, but he was a weakly, tiny infant, and we all saw from the first that he could not live long. Three days

after his birth we gave him the names of Charles Vane, and when the quiet ceremony of baptism was over, my husband carried him to the couch where I lay, and put him gently into my arms. He opened his blue eyes, and looked at me wistfully, as though, poor baby, he dimly understood I was some one he might have learned to love if he could have lived a little while longer, then he dropped his wee tired head upon my breast with a little sigh, and died. I do not think I was very sorry, for I knew that I had a baby still, and that in some quiet corner of Paradise I should find, by-and-by, a tiny smiling face that I should know, and hear a childish voice that the angels would have taught to call me 'mother'!

My husband's rectory was a very short distance from the Norwood Cemetery, in which my father had been buried; and at my request they laid the little coffin beside his grave, for I liked to think that they were so close together, and that when I was able to go out again, I might sit beside them both as they slept so quietly there and still, in their low green beds, whereon the grass waved, and the roses bloomed, and the sunshine and the rain of heaven came day after day to bless the peaceful rest of the dead.

That practice of burying one's friends in vaults is very horrible! It is so much better to think that those we have loved lie out beneath God's wide, open sky, under the clear-eyed shining stars and the warmth of the golden summer time, and the soft, beautiful snow that the angels spread so reverently over the long graves like a white pall to keep the frost and the cold of winter from those who lie below, than to know we have put away the bodies of our dead

upon shelves in a damp cupboard underground, with great iron doors and heavy bars shutting them in like the gates of a dungeon!

But it was very long before I was able to go to the cemetery. After little Charlie's death I lay a long time so ill that it was believed I should die, and I almost hoped so myself, for I had grown terribly weary of the world. But little by little my strength came back to me, and at length I used to walk up and down the garden-paths, leaning on my husband's arm, and watching the companies of swallows that congregated and wheeled and darted round the gabled roof of the rectory, already assembling for their southward journey. At last, one morning about a quarter before nine, I crept alone out of my husband's domains and found my way to the cemetery. I took with me the latest blooms our parterres had yielded, some golden pompones and lobelias, and a few hothouse rarities of fern. Kneeling by the two green mounds I had come to visit, I laid my flowers across my father's grave with unsteady fingers, and hung a wreath of maiden-hair and feathery exotics over the white stone cross that marked the resting-place of my baby-boy. But, not daring to remain too long upon a first expedition after so severe an illness as mine had been, and fearing to be overtaken by the rain—for the sky was gloomy with gathering clouds, and the wind blew sharply and keen from the north-east—I hastened home as quickly as my weakness permitted, and retired to my own boudoir. As I entered the room the tiny French clock upon the mantel-piece chimed for the quarter to ten. Raising my hand to draw aside the muslin curtain that shaded the window, my glance was suddenly attracted to some

unwonted appearance connected with my wedding finger. The next instant I perceived the nature of this peculiarity, and uttered a cry. I had lost my serpent ring! And straightway with the knowledge of that loss a flood of long-slumbering memories awakened within me, and the whole tide of my old passionate love poured back upon my heart. Only a few weeks ago I had heard from Alice that Vane was in the Crimea, and expecting soon to send us the account of some brilliant engagement in which—he had gaily written home—he should certainly distinguish himself and earn the most brilliant laurels imaginable. Where was he now? what had become of him? And the ring! the ring he gave me! the ring I had promised never to move from my hand!

Not heeding the shower, which now began to fall in good earnest, I snatched my bonnet and mantle from the table and fled back to the cemetery as fast as my faltering steps would carry me. I scattered the flowers upon the two graves, I tore asunder the wreath of maiden-hair, and suddenly, from a hanging spray of the delicate fern, shook out the gleaming jewel. It dropped upon the grave, and then rolled downwards to my feet. The matter was soon explained. My fingers were wasted and attenuated with long sickness, and the ring, being weighty, had slipped from my hand as I weaved the garland.

On returning to the rectory I met my maid. 'Please, ma'am, I didn't think you were out, because of the rain coming, but I couldn't find you indoors, so I went down the garden to look for you. The postman's just brought this.' I took the letter she offered me—a mere ordinary petition for a charity-school vote—but the date

of the postmark upon another envelope struck me like a sudden, staggering blow. 'Phœbe!' cried I, almost choked with the awful horror of the idea, 'is this October the twenty-fifth?' She looked back and answered me glibly in the affirmative. The anniversary of my wedding-day!

So on October the twenty-fifth, eighteen hundred and fifty-four, precisely nine years from the day on which Vane had put the serpent ring upon my finger, I had dropped it upon the grave of my dead child! What if, after all, my lost love had drawn his gift off my hand himself?

A short time after this curious loss and recovery of my ring I sat again one morning in my boudoir, very early after breakfast. A copy of the day's 'Times,' new and damp from the press, lay ready for my perusal upon a little inlaid console before the window, and I drew my arm-chair towards it and sat down with the opened paper in my hand. There, under the heading of Crimean Intelligence, I read the first account of that splendid act of military madness, that gallant deed of modern chivalry, which crowned the lustre of the victory at Balaclava, and wrote with the best of English blood the worthiest record of English daring—the charge of the Light Brigade. My heart burned as I read the story of that doomed Six Hundred who rode so bravely and devotedly to their fate in the very teeth of the Russian musketry, asking no reason for the wild command, seeking to find no excuse, only sweeping down straight upon the hostile ranks of glittering steel, with the courage of lions and the calm nobility of Englishmen who know that they are riding to their death.

Lives lost? What was this—this—here beneath my eyes, here

in my trembling hand—this well-known name looking so strange and awful in the midst of the common, black-printed columns? What was this terrible line that forced itself upon my sight, and burnt its way into my heart, as though every letter of it had been a stroke of fire? It was here, under the list of the killed and wounded.

'On the 25th October, in the charge of the Light Cavalry Brigade at Balaclava, Captain Vane Randall, 17th Lancers—shot through the heart.'

Ah! lovers and sisters and mothers, who have suddenly come upon such another dear familiar name in the obituaries of war, you and such as you only can understand the dull stupor of agony, the incredulous horror that sickened and smote me in that awful moment. I pressed my two palms to my temples with a vague consciousness of darkness and pain. Then a new thought flashed upon my mind, and I lowered my left hand and held it out before me. I could distinctly feel that Vane's ring was still upon it; but for some instinctive reason I cannot explain, I dared not look at it for a moment, but turned my head aside and began to glance round again slowly, as though I had expected to see some spectral thing, some dreadful apparition.

O strange and awful wonder that riveted my eyes at last! O terrible inexplicable accident, more ghastly and expressly significant than the first! *There was no longer a diamond upon the serpent's crest, and I looked only into the empty cavity wherein the stone had been set!*

My lost diamond was never found, though every possible search was instituted on its account. I reiterated my positive conviction that it must have been in the ring when I entered my

boudoir that morning; and that as I had not stirred from the room until after my discovery of the accident, the jewel must have dropped somewhere between the door and the window. But in vain; the maids were incredulous, and I did not care to trouble my husband with the relation of so singular a disappearance.

So I put away the object of this extraordinary history in my cabinet, neither daring nor desiring to wear it any longer; and it is needless to say that I regarded as sacrilege the idea of replacing the lost gem, believing that Vane himself would yet redeem his last promise, and complete the chain of these strange and unparalleled adventures.

*He would send me another gift in the stead of my lost jewel.* In this expectation I was not disappointed.

One afternoon, not many days after the announcement in England of the Balacava victory, and the disappearance of the fateful diamond, Phoebe informed me that a gentleman waited to see me in my husband's study. She brought me his card, but the name upon it was unknown to me—'Colonel Somers, Scots Greys.' I found him a man of stately presence and peculiarly gentle voice, but of so haggard and melancholy an expression of face, that the very sight of him filled me with pity and sympathetic interest.

'Madam,' said he, rising and bowing low as I entered the room, 'such an utter stranger to you as I have the misfortune to be, ought certainly to excuse himself for the suddenness of an intrusion like this. But I am'—he hesitated a little, and his voice slightly dropped and faltered—'*I have been,—a friend of Captain Randall; and being brought unexpectedly to England upon some very urgent*

private affairs, impossible even in the present state of the war to neglect, I have come here to deliver to you with my own hands a packet, the contents of which, I am told, must certainly be more rightfully yours than anyone else's.'

He placed on the table, as he spoke, a small leathern jewel-case, worn and stained, which I did not recognise. My thanks rose to my lips, but the tears were ready behind them, and I could scarcely trust myself to speak. Colonel Somers took pity upon me, seeing me so distressed, and dropping his eyes from my face, he added, in his slow, musical tones:

'No doubt you know, Mrs. Moreton, the history of the disastrous Light Cavalry charge at Balacava, a month ago. It was a dreadful business—the result, probably, of some misapprehension between Lord Raglan and Captain Nolan—who fell, poor fellow, doing his mistaken duty so admirably in the front of the Russian batteries. I did not myself take part in the charge, for I belong to the Heavy; but I saw the devoted brigade ride to its destruction, and I never shall forget the splendid sight. Cavalry ought on no account to act without support; infantry should always be close at hand to back them up; but we were the only reserve behind these men, guns and infantry being far in the rear. The brigade advanced in two lines, quickening their pace as they went—trot—canter—gallop—then a splendid burst! We heard them cheer as they flew into the smoke of the Russian batteries; we saw their lines thinned and broken—saw them join again—saw them rally. We could catch the flash of their sabres as they dashed among the guns, scattering the enemy's columns right and left, and striking down the gunners. I do not believe one man in the whole brigade

flinched from the desperate encounter. But gods could not have done what those brave fellows failed to do. They will settle these things at home, I suppose. I am a soldier, and I must pay my tribute where it is due. I never saw such magnificent riding, such undaunted courage in my life, before I saw this, and I have been many years in the Queen's service, so that I speak with some experience of battle-fields and military enthusiasm. Those Muscovite wretches should have revered the unparalleled valour of this Six Hundred; but they could neither understand nor appreciate it, and they opened their cursed volleys of grape and canister upon the returning remnants of the band, and shot the brave fellows down as though they had been dogs!

Colonel Somers paused a moment, and presently resumed, in altered and calmer tones:

'After the whole thing was over, some of our men found Captain Randall lying across his dead horse, among the foremost of those who had fallen, with his face turned towards the guns he had ridden out to capture. They brought him to me, because they knew he had been my friend. When I opened his vest, I saw that he had been shot in the heart, and the bullet that had brought him his death had passed on its way through a little gold pendant which I found tied about his neck with a silk thread. I hesitated at first to remove it, perceiving how much he must have valued it; but when I reflected that he was now no longer able to estimate that value, and that his father and sister would dearly prize the little treasure as a memorial of him whom they had lost, I altered my mind, and laid the trinket aside in a small leather

stud-box of my own, until I should have an opportunity of restoring it to my friend's family. Coming to England so soon after the battle, I brought it with me, and yesterday took it to Miss Randall, at Randall Hall, but she told me it could belong only to you; and I begged your address of her, that I might have the satisfaction of giving it myself into your hands.'

I was weeping now unrestrainedly, for I could no longer conceal my emotion, and I knew from the tone of the voice that spoke to me that Vane's friend himself was scarcely less moved.

'Colonel Somers,' said I, 'you have done me a kindness that no words can repay; and if I fail to thank you sufficiently, it is because I feel so deeply the goodness and delicacy that prompted your visit. But I want to know one thing more: the hour at which that disastrous order of the twenty-fifth of October took place. Can you remember?'

'The Light Cavalry Brigade,' he answered, 'charged at ten minutes past eleven. By twenty-five minutes to noon, only the dead and dying were left in front of the Russian guns.'

I had no need to ask further. Exactly at that time, allowing for the difference of longitude between London and the Crimea, the ring which Vane Randall had given me fell from my finger upon the grave of the child who was called after his name. But I longed to set my last doubt at rest, and I took the morocco *étui* in my hand.

'You will excuse me?' I said, pressing the spring, as I looked up at Colonel Somers.

He bowed his head in acquiescence.

*Alas! alas! It was the gold locket I had given Vane nine years ago, all riddled and crushed by the bullet that had pierced his heart.*

LUCY AND PUCK.

(See Mr. G. D. Leslie's picture.)

E'EN of the men who do contrive  
To take their tide at flood-time, I've  
Observed that but a fraction  
Are quite content with Fate's good things,  
And find the place they've sailed to brings  
Entire satisfaction.

But if the stream of life would land  
Me close to you where now you stand,  
                Against those antique portals,  
With Puck—the lucky little elf—  
I'd joyfully confess myself  
                The happiest of mortals !

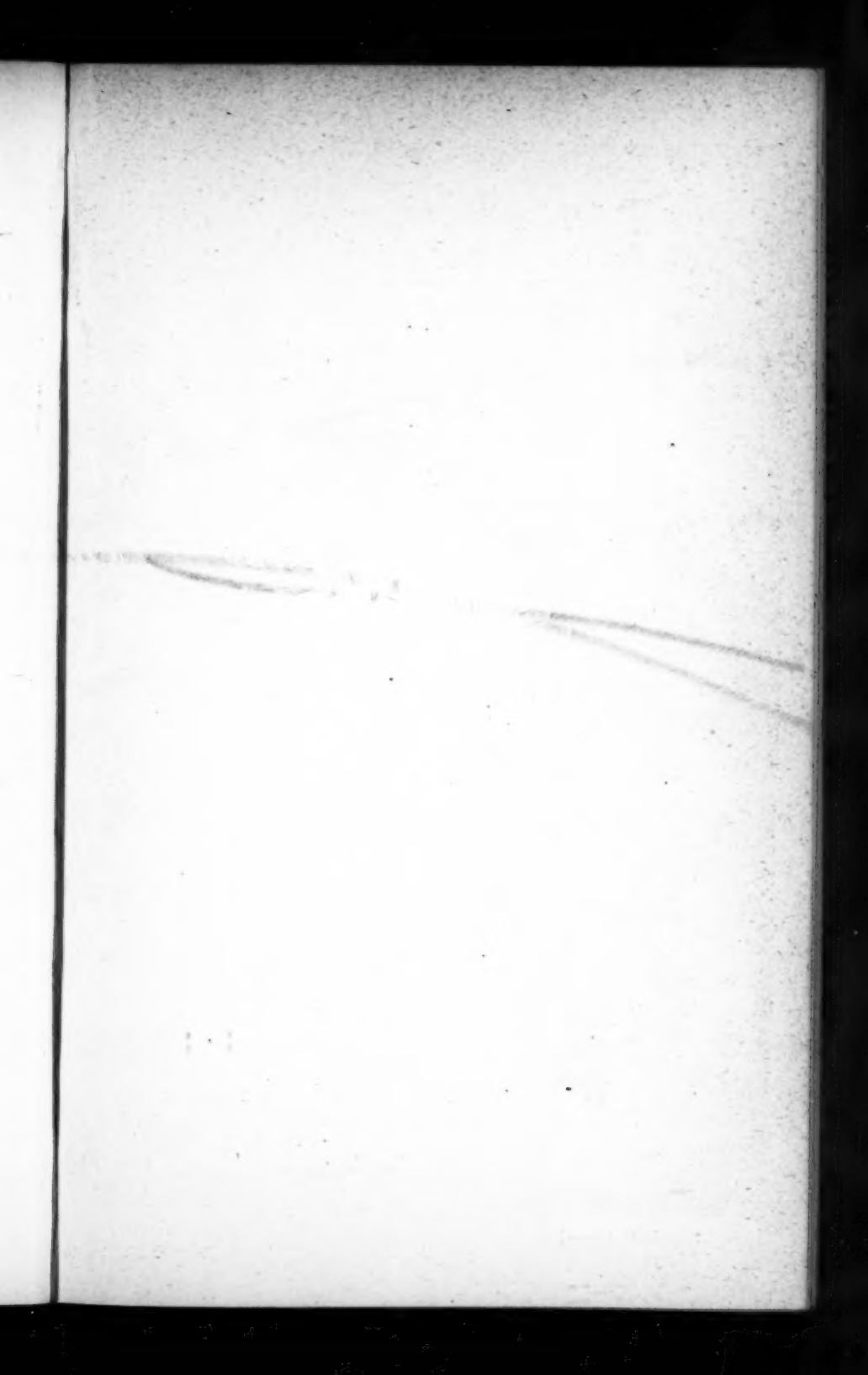
Now, who will dare aver 'tis true,  
That charming little girls like you  
Are kindred to those frights ;  
Who thrust themselves in blatant wrath  
Before the world, and there shriek forth  
A tale about their 'rights.'

Who manage somehow to repress  
That loving, trusting tenderness—  
A woman's chiefest beauty :  
Who all that's gentle from them fling,—  
Are dying to do *everything*—  
That is, except their duty.

What are the rights that they don't get?  
I never have discovered yet,  
And so I cannot say;  
But if a girl, I think you'll find,  
To have a thing makes up her mind,  
There's sure to be a way.

They entertain, we've always heard,  
A love for that sweet final word—  
To take it would be treason :  
No one has e'er refused them this,  
Or to accept '*Because it is* !'  
For a sufficing reason.





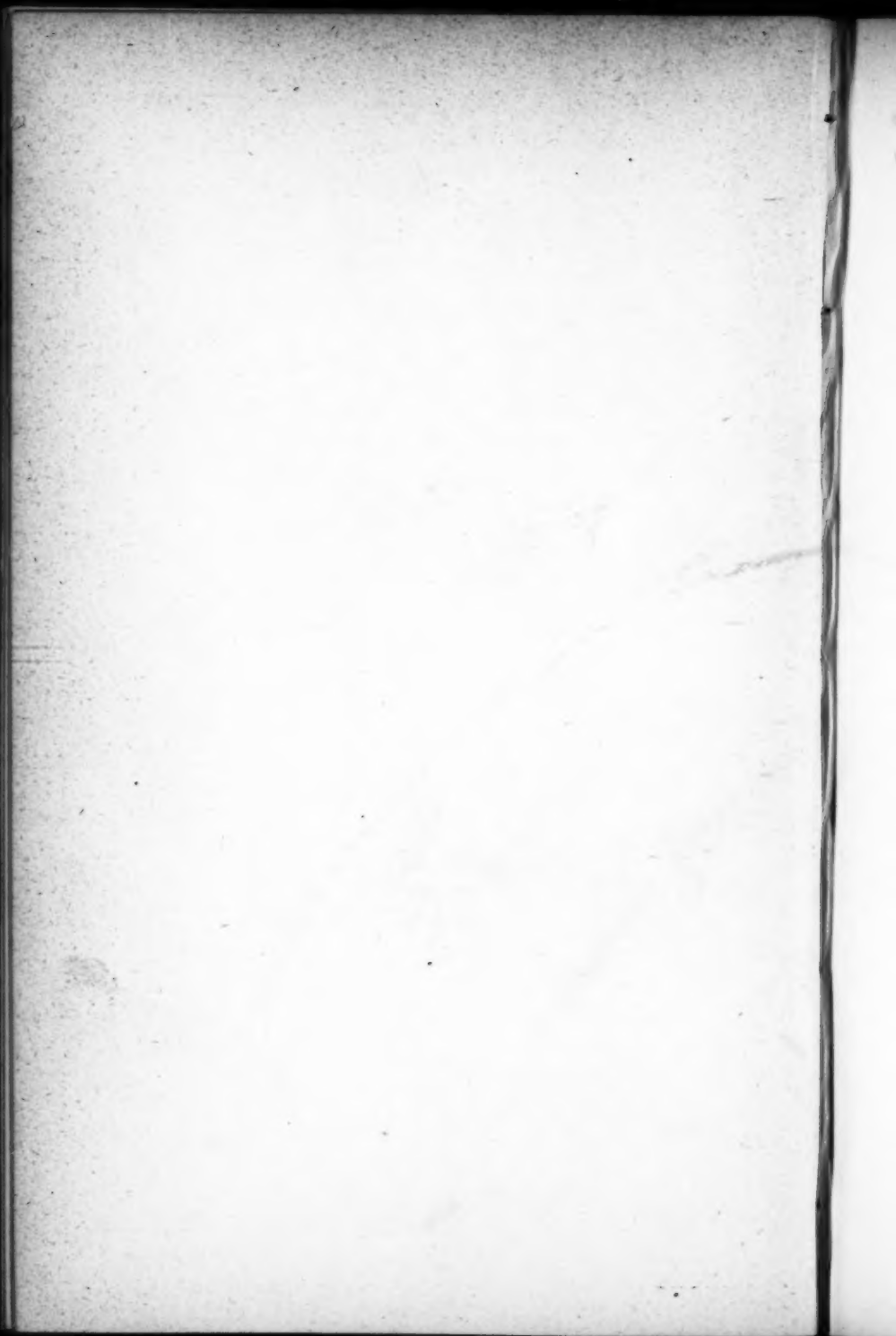


Drawn by H. Johnson.]

BETWEEN THE



BEEN THE DANCES.



But I should like to see one who,  
If you set him a task to do,  
                    Would for a moment linger ;  
Who 'neath that small thumb could resist,  
Or whom you tried in vain to twist  
                    Around your little finger.

You're Queen of Hearts ! and, as you stand,  
I'm positive that all the land  
                    No fairer sight produces.  
There's no one who disputes your might,  
Heart-strings, strung up however tight,  
                    Sweet Lucy's glance unlooses.

But Puck's so small, I think that he  
Should not your sole protector be—  
                    That little dog's in luck—  
Or wouldn't this arrangement do :  
Small Puck shall still take care of you,  
                    And I'll take care of Puck ?  
                                ALFRED E. T. WATSON.



*Lady Linden*  
*at Home*

*Monday. July 1<sup>st</sup>*

*Music at 10.*

**L**ADY L. (at the top of the stairs). My dear Lydia, is not that our dear Pocock's head, struggling up the first flight?

*Lydia.* It is very difficult to recognize a head from such a point of view. But that is from want of practice, though I see no reason why we ought not to know our friends from the tops of their heads as well as from their side and front faces. How they *do* come rustling and crackling up—thick as—

*Lady L.* Do not say anything about the leaves of Vallambrosa, I implore you! Now to begin the greetings. How de-do? so glad you have come. Where is Mr. Greymayre? Not brought your second daughter?—How de-do? Ventured to bring your niece, my dear Lady Foretop? Of course. But I will ask you to go on into the next room; there are plenty of seats, and they will be very hard to be got presently. Ah, here is our dear Pocock at last on dry land.

*Mr. Pocock.* Yes! I have got to you, my dear lady—buffeted my way up. Did you see how I was fixed? Half way on the journey

two ladies' dresses or trains got wound round me like silk bandages. As each was pulling a different way, I was bound up more and more tightly, as if I had been wounded. I had literally to dive down and drag the compresses off, and restore to each her own. So we have music to-night—'a little music,' as they call it.

*Lydia.* Which you know, of course, means a great deal—long formal programme.

*Lady L.* What can one do? I could not give a ball. I am not able, at my time of life, to sit up until four in the morning, looking at my own species prancing about. We can all see a *ballet d'action* at the theatre.

*Mr. P.* Besides, balls are quite going out. It is really very odd that in our 'Court Journals' and 'Morning Posts,' there is such a meagre show of entries—sometimes not two a week. I remember twenty years ago (alas!), when I was—ahem!—a year or two younger than I am now—as I would come home from a dinner-party through the squares, seeing all the windows lit up and wide open, with figures



passing to and fro, while at every corner you would hear the melodious horn winding out the valse—and would not know where the sound was coming from. I have counted a score, as I returned, of a single evening—while the carriages would go clattering about half the night.

*Lady L.* I suspect the reason is the thing has become a drug. The new rich people—those peers' daughters who now marry Manchester merchants—we shall name no names, of course—can eclipse the indigent fashionables—who have grown disgusted with the competition.

*Lydia.* Marriages are great festivals now; and people seem to me to go there as to balls. I suppose they find that it reminds the young men of the great business of life more effectively than a foolish scene like this, which, when you come to think of it, is really opposed to all serious reflection.

*Mr. P.* It will by-and-by come to this, that the whole day will be devoted to 'going out.' Dress for the wedding, which will take up, say, from twelve till three. Dress for the flower show, four till five. Tea or drum, six till seven. Dinner-party, seven till ten. Evening ditto, eleven till midnight. Ball, midnight till three or four—à discretion. But about this music of yours. Explain—unfold. How is it that you have got a berth on board this galley?

*Lady L.* Of course you know I am not musical—and know nothing about it. I can play the piano; and, as you know, Thalberg was good enough to say that I was one of his most creditable pupils—and I used to sing pretty well; but half the young ladies now can say the same.

*Mr. P.* Indeed, the piano has lately become part of the gym-

nastics—only a little more difficult than croquet. It is amazing how cleverly the masters teach the unmusical girls. How it is overcrowded as a profession; it really makes the heart sink to read the long strings of musical mechanics in the 'Times,' who give their morning concerts, and announce that 'they have returned from the Continent;'—no one caring whether they stayed there all their lives.

*Lady L.* Except, probably, their butchers and bakers.

*Mr. P.* And where are the pupils for this musical rabble? Half of them must be starving. And as for the morning concerts—I was persuaded to take a ticket for one at Lady Fantail's, at Grosvenor Gate, who had kindly, you know, given her house—

*Lady L.* Sickening. There are actually plenty of people ready to pay double the money to be allowed to enter the illustrious mansion, and look from afar off at the illustrious hostess, who hardly thinks it worth her while to attend. They really have a dreamy notion that it might by some happy chance lead to an acquaintance. 'Stranger things have happened,' the parasite says to her husband. With this view they send a handsome subscription to her, and not to the poor musical navvy, Mr. Grisi Smith.

*Lydia.* What a name! when did you invent that?

*Mr. P.* Evolved it out of my own consciousness. I have really known instances of the kind. The hostess, of course, only hands on the ingeniously-phrased document, with the enclosure, to Grisi Smith. At the worst they can correct their friends about Lady Fantail's appearance, colour of her hair, &c.; make out the names of the company. Then there is the house itself, for whose walls they feel a reverence. Like the shell—

'Still they remember the august abodes,  
And murmurs as the Ocean murmurs  
thee.'

The whole thing is overdone, and the music master's morning concert thus becomes a nuisance. I know myself the way in which Grisi Smith was manufactured. He was the son of a tenant on Lord Fantail's estate, and used to sing a ballad, with a fair voice, at the Harvest Homes; sometimes was had up at the Castle when there was company. They got him lessons from some one at the cathedral. He was sent over to France for a year, and came back Grisi Smith. That qualified him to go to London and give lessons. Lady Fantail teases every one to employ him; she won't have him for her own daughters, but thinks him good enough for any one else's. As a matter of course we have Mr. Grisi Smith's annual morning concert, which will be given at Grosvenor Gate, by the kind permission, &c. By some ingenious arrangement, or violation of the English language, these nuisances come twice a year. I know I have been asked twice a year. But tell me about your enterprise. How did you collect all this musical talent?

*Lady L.* Oh! I had nothing to do with it. Put it all into the hands of Timpano, you know, who teaches the Princesses, and is really a nice, good creature. He engaged to supply the music, just as Gunter did the refreshments. There is the programme for you.

*Mr. P.* The bill of fare, also like Gunter's. Let us see.

'GROSVENOR SQUARE.

'July 1st.

'PARTE PRIMA.'

*Lady L.* 'Part the first' would not do, of course, as we are all English.

*Mr. P.* Yes; as well say, 'Bill of fare,' instead of 'Menu du jour.' Well, 'Parte prima.'

'Duetto, "La Donzella"—Timpano—Mdlle. TOLLA and Mdlle. CARLOTTA TOLLA.'

Ah! I see. The sisters Tolla pursuing each other in thirds all the way through.

*Lady L.* Yes. One of the sweet things that Timpano teaches his young ladies.

*Mr. P.* 'Solo, "Largo al Fac-totum," SIGNOR BUFFONE.'

A round, barrel-shaped little man, I am sure, who will be ex-cruciatingly droll in an unknown tongue.

*Lady L.* And have all the fun to himself. I have not even seen him, so I cannot tell. But we may not anticipate. What comes next?

*Mr. P.* A *Grand Duo*, Violino e Piano, on motifs from the songs of Signor Timpano—Timpano—Herr SCHAUB and Fraulein SCHAUB.

*Lady L.* The new German violinist. I am told he is wonderful.

*Mr. P.* Scampering over his strings, I suppose, like a cat over the tiles. What next?

'Romance, "Ma Fille"—Timpano—M. BEAUNE.' Timpano here, Timpano there. Why, it seems to be all Timpano.

*Lady L.* But don't you know that he is the man of the hour. Every one sings his songs. It is considered a great compliment his coming to me, I assure you. But I must tell you about poor Beaune. You will see him. A most charming, elegant creature—a gentleman by birth—but driven from his native land.

*Mr. P.* (smiling). I know—by the unsettled state of things—suspected by Thiers, and all that. The Prussians pillaged his house. Strange to say it is always a musician that these barbarians have

selected as victims. I have met a dozen, at least: some who have lost their estates: still the Prussians could not have taken *these* away like the clocks.

*Lady L.* Don't be so bitter. See what a handsome man he is.

*Mr. P.* Exactly like the languishing fellows on the front page of the ballads. He seems to be sitting alone and forlorn. He hopes the young ladies will notice him, and see that he has nought to do with the rest of the surging *canaille* behind him. I notice at this kind of concert how much the singers and players enjoy themselves in this enclosure—how they laugh and applaud each other.

*Lady L.* See, here is Colonel Antrobus struggling up.

*Mr. P.* He hasn't brought his whip with him, I see.

*Lady L.* Delighted to see you, Colonel Antrobus, off your box. I drove round by the *Magazine* to see all your four-in-hands start. It was really a pretty sight. There were one or two amateurs who didn't know how to drive, or looked as if they didn't.

*Col. A.* The procession was certainly effective. But the ladies did not muster strong enough. Fetlock said, neatly enough, that his drag is meant to be a sort of bouquet-holder, with the flowers—roses, lilies of the valley, and the rest—arranged on the top.

*Lydia.* A bouquet drawn by four horses! Somehow that does not seem appropriate. Was that Lady Fetlock seated beside him on the box seat?

*Col. A.* Yes. As we are on the subject of neat things, a motto might be suggested for the club of 'Light only on the box.' However, I am glad to see that this new fashion has come in without any of the old horsey slang. I have not heard a word about

'tooling' a fine turn-out down to Richmond, or a matchless 'team of tita.' This makes me think that it won't last, and that the old sporting spirit is not present. One or two seemed nervous, and drove their thoroughbreds with an excess of caution.

*Mr. P.* Hark to the twang of fiddles. I think we ought to go in now and hear some music. I declare there is the little round man singing something funny. Just listen to him. How he works his eyes and arms, and shakes his head slyly. We have just come in for the 'patter' portion.

*Lady L.* What do you mean by that?

*Mr. P.* Why; just at the end of these irresistibly droll songs the singer always bursts into this torrent of syllables, as if he had just turned Tattenham Corner, and wanted to ride in first. He is evidently got some side-splitting joke all to himself, as you may see from the grave faces of the young ladies near him. But only listen now—listen to the clatter of voices. It's like the roaring of the sea. And yet I could swear there is some one singing in the next room.

*Lady L.* Of course there is. My concert is going on all this time. Just look round. What flirtation, noisy laughter, laying of heads together. Look at the confidential party who have drawn together in the corner. They find a piquancy in hearing the music going on in the next room, while they talk on covered by that noise, as they consider it. You don't see the same animation at an ordinary drum. I suppose they find a satisfaction, like the boys at school, in doing what is disagreeable.

*Mr. P.* It is more, I think, that wish to show themselves superior to regulations of any kind, which we often see in some of your fine

ladies. There is an air of *prestige* about such proceedings, as it shows rules, &c., were not made for them, and that they are above them.

*Lydia.* Then we ought to show an example. I hear some plaintive and tender accents. I am sure it is your expatriated tenor and his dying daughter.

*Mr. P.* Daughter dying, and he come out! Oh, I see. The song, 'Ma Fille Mourante.' Yes, there he is. Observe the mournfulness of his face; one would think he really had a sick daughter at home.

*Lady L.* He might have a dozen for all these people—Sh—sh! Do, please, Miss Mettleton—you must really listen to M. Beaune.

*Mr. P.* What is it all about?

*Lydia.* Don't you hear it. It is an actor who has to play some comic part, and is convulsing the house while his daughter lies dying at home. See how the accompaniment is hurrying on. He is describing the crowded theatre—the enjoyment in the stalls. She is laughing now. But—pause—

*Mr. P.* I see. We are getting to the Refrain. There he goes—'Ma Fil-le Mouran-te'—'Ma Fille Mourante'—Rum ti tum. A pretty air, and I really think he is crying. Wonderful creatures the French for that. They are like those syphon-bottles; you can 'tap' the tears, like the soda-water, at any moment. Bravo!

*Lady L.* I am afraid you are ill, or getting ill.

*Mr. P.* I know what you mean, because I am so ill-natured. But all this is between you and me. It really means nothing. Oh, I see yonder the black-glazed calico head-dress. You have got the Ashango minister to come.

*Lady L.* A most agreeable man. Doesn't he look like a Frenchman, with his twinkling eyes, black

moustaches, and round figure. He talks delightfully, though I do wish he would not wear that head-dress. I must own that I am getting rather tired of those foreign ministers. They go everywhere, and are glad to go anywhere. I own I love that little grey, grizzly one, who talks in different French, and has such a fine decoration. He is charming, and is so modest and retiring.

*Mr. P.* We shall have kings by-and-by. We shall be grinding them against the drawing-room doors, with a rough 'Beg your pardon.'

*Lady L.* By-the-way, I see there are no travelling kings putting up at the hotels now. Claridge's ought to call itself 'The Belgian Arms,' or 'The Crown,' or take some good old loyal sign.

*Mr. P.* I know you are going to give the usual cut at the Queen—Buckingham Palace shut—shame to send our royal guests to an hotel. I declare I can't join in these cries. I think it is the beginning of putting things on a sensible footing.

*Lydia.* And how sensible?

*Lady L.* And on what footing?

*Mr. P.* Why, judge it by your own case. You get away from this round of dinners and parties for a little quiet; travel off to a distant capital to relax, unbend, or whatever it is called, your mind. Would you relish being seized on, as you arrive, by some kind and obstreperous friends, who will drag you off from the hotel, and seize the opportunity of giving, in your honour, a round of parties and entertainments. It must be an inexpressible relief for these tourist monarchs to find themselves among a sensible people, who will let them do as they like. It must be a luxury, too, for them to go to an hotel. Believe me, this rough and

ready hospitality to persons 'only passing through' is a bore and an oppression.

*Lady L.* Now there is my violin man beginning. He is celebrated for his tone—and expression.

*Mr. P.* I can't hear him from this place. But I can just catch the horny, groaning sound which these men of feeling put into their

instruments. There goes his bow skipping up the gamut, like a little school girl down a corridor. He looks vindictive at it. Now for the variations—see how he claws and gripes it—plucks its entrails out.

*Lady L.* I won't listen to you any more. Go over and take some lady down to refreshment.



## OUR PHILOSOPHERS.

## II.

DENMARK HILL, as those who interest themselves in the *habitats* of our authors are aware, might claim to be the literary suburb of London in the present century, as Twickenham was in the last. It is not a new suburb, with hastily run up houses and extemporized gardens; but one of old fashion and repute, substantial, well timbered, situated well both in respect to the great metropolis and the sweet repose of the Surrey hills. Those who constantly pass it on the High Level line will certainly think that it has the prettiest of suburban railway stations. Not very far from the railway station, taking the road on the left, and whether more properly belonging to Denmark Hill or Herne Hill left somewhat undecided, is a house which I love to contemplate, and which in future times will often perhaps attract pilgrims' feet. This is the house which Mr. Ruskin inhabited for so many years, and from which he has dated so many and perhaps the best of his writings. We are sorry to find that he has now quitted it in something very much like disgust. The metropolitan gin palaces and their spurious architecture have been too much for his 'finer feelings,' harrowed by the reflection that perhaps the 'Seven Lamps of Architecture' have had something to do with the matter. 'I have had indirect influence,' writes Mr. Ruskin, 'on nearly every cheap villa-builder between this and Bromley; and there is scarcely a public-house near the Crystal Palace but sells its gin-and-bitters under pseudo-Venetian capitals, copied from the

Church of the Madonna of Health or of Miracles. And one of my principal motives for leaving my present house is, that it is surrounded everywhere by these accursed Frankenstein monsters of indirectly my own making.' He complains, too, in one of his books, how the fresh air of the Norwood Hills is becoming poisoned with smoke. And so Mr. Ruskin has quitted Denmark Hill for Coniston. We confess we are sorry for it. We know indeed the tender shadows of those mountains, and the lovely scenery of the upper reaches of those waters. But Mr. Ruskin is not even as one of the lake poets. His mission is not alone to interpret Nature, but to interpret Art, and therefore to mingle in the keen play of intellect, the full fray of criticism and discussion. And a home such as this, within the city and yet not of it, close to all the haunts of art and education, and yet open to the sun and breeze, appears to me fitter for his peculiar genius than the solitudes of Coniston. As you go along the dusty high road there are trim villas, or rather fine houses, on the right hand and on the left. There is little indeed to notice beyond the unusual extent of the demesne. But, as soon as you have passed the lodge and gone up the path, you discern a noble cedar, kindred to that in 'Maud,' 'sighing for Lebanon.' When you are in the rear of the house you are at once in the open country. The air is brilliant, the prospect noble. I look on these groves and walks as those of the gardens of the hero Academus. A secluded walk



runs all round a stretch of meadow grass. And there are combinations of fruit, and foliage, and flowers, and lawn such as you rarely see. I only hope Mr. Ruskin will be better pleased with his new home than his last, but it will be long ere the associations of Denmark Hill are shifted to Coniston.

In that clever little book, 'Ethics of the Dust,' Mr. Ruskin is actually lecturing a class of school-girls, which we know by experience to be an extremely pleasant employment. On a few of the simplest facts respecting crystallization he establishes all kinds of sapiencies and moralities. Our clever girl, Dora, of sweet seventeen, is made to say, 'Well, it may be all very fine and philosophical; but shouldn't I just like to read you the end of the second volume of "Modern Painters." To which the lecturer ("of incalculable age") replies, 'My dear, do you think any teacher could be worth your listening to, or anybody else's listening to, who had learned nothing and altered his mind in nothing, from seven-and-twenty to seven-and-forty? But the second volume is very good for you as far as it goes.' To how many of us has 'Modern Painters' been an education, been in itself a noble system of philosophy. What a curious theory is that German notion that a disease of the eyes made Turner paint with his peculiar colouring, and so produced Ruskin's great work that made the world praise Turner. Mr. Ruskin may be turning crotchety and eccentric, but he may do whatever he likes, and the English language and the English people will still owe him an intense, an incalculable amount of gratitude. All we know of a brave, unselfish, generous life, is in harmony with his writings. It is a

divine philosophy that bears the fruits of good living. Perhaps his own words suit himself: 'If, on looking back, your whole life should seem rugged as a palm-tree stem; still, never mind, so long as it has been growing, and has its grand green shade of leaves, and weight of honied fruit at top.' And once again: 'It seems to me, on the whole, that the feelings of the purest and most mightily-passioned human souls are likely to be truest. Not, indeed, if they do not desire to know the truth, or blind themselves to it that they may please themselves with passion; for then they are no longer pure; but if continually seeking and accepting the truth, as far as it is discernible, they trust their Maker for the integrity of the instincts He has gifted them with, and rest in the sense of a higher truth which they cannot demonstrate, I think they will be most in the right, so.'

And yet he is so odd. He will not go to the Hartz, 'for I want to retain the romantic feeling about the name, and I have done myself some harm already by seeing the monotonous and heavy form of the Brocken.' So odd about his books; I believe you can only get them now from somebody in a little village in Kent. But it would take pages to discuss the oddities of Mr. Ruskin. We might also talk about his schemes for good, his endowments, subsidies, benevolences, and so on. But we fall back on his stately prose-poetry, the memory of which will always haunt the student with the sense of the sweetness, sweet almost to pain, of the summer sunset, and then again reminding us in its energetic march of a coronation anthem.

In every great poet there is a strong element of the philosopher. This is found in Shelley, and still

more in Wordsworth, who has been said to reproduce the philosophy of Spinoza. Byron was nothing of a philosopher, but in intellectual power he was below Shelley; in moral power he was below Wordsworth. Coleridge was a great poet, but he was in a still higher degree a great philosopher. The philosophical aspect of the Brownings is the matter that we shall elsewhere hope to discuss. Now let us look for a few moments at Mr. Tennyson. The great question that underlies all our science and all our thinking is concerned with the reality of the soul's eternal life and its destinies; whether we are homeless, wandering men, specks thrown up for a moment on the surface of the boundless billows of existence, or whether we are procuring a settled, ordered course over the apparently illimitable sea, to some destined haven. Men eagerly listen for the last scientific proofs, or the latest metaphysical argument on these absorbing topics, although they may seem to conduct us to materialism or nihilism, and beat down the unconquerable instinct of immortality on which the soul reposes as if on a rock. How nobly and how philosophically does Tennyson sketch the conflict.

"So careful of the type," But, no.  
From scarp'd cliff, and quarried stone  
She cries, "A thousand types are gone:  
I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me:  
I bring to life, I bring to death:  
The spirit does but mean the breath:  
I know no more." And he shall be.

"Man, her lost work, who seemed so fair,  
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
Who rolled the palms to wintry skies,  
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer.

"Who trusted God was love indeed,  
And love Creation's fixed law—  
Though Nature, red in tooth and claw  
With ravine, shrieked against his creed—

"Who lived, who suffered countless ills,  
Who battled for the True, the Just,  
Be blown about the desert dust,  
Or sealed within the iron hills!

"No more? A monster then, a dream,  
A discord. Dragons in the prime  
That tore each other in the slime  
Were mellow music marched with him.

"O life as futile, then, as frail!  
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
What hope of answer or redress?  
Behind the veil, behind the veil."

The philosophical vein is chiefly shown in the earlier volumes in that wonderful poem, the 'Palace of Arts.' There was a tribe of commentators who publish essays about Mr. Tennyson's poem, and to them we would especially commend this one. The general drift of the poem is that art, science, knowledge, are nothing without religion. Mr. Tennyson advances beyond this poem in that wonderful composition, 'The Two Voices.' The problem is something like that thrown in 'Maud,'

"Do we move ourselves, or are we moved  
by an unseen hand at a game?"

Then, I suppose, most readers of Tennyson have tried to construct a theory of the exact meaning of the 'Vision of Sin,' and to explain the line:

"God made himself an awful rose of dawn."

After all, 'In Memoriam' stands forth as Tennyson's noblest philosophical utterance; but, perhaps, there are occasional pieces and passages in his later writings, where we have his ultimate and most developed views. For instance, there is the little poem called 'Wages,' in which we are told that virtue does not desire any wages at all in the ordinary sense in which men speak of wages.

'She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet  
seats of the just  
To rest in a golden grove or bask in a  
summer sky,  
Give her the wages of going on and  
not to die.'

The passage is remarkable as in opposition to a certain quietism, very characteristic of Mr. Tennyson. We do not like the shrinking from death; we believe that virtue instinctively desires the blessed isles, and the 'quiet seats of the just;' but still the healthy moral tone of action and hard work is a good instinct of the Tennysonian ethics. In the poem of the 'Holy Grail,' for among the best poems in the volume that bears the name, Arthur, *flos regum*, touches on the deepest problems of philosophy.

'Let visions of the night, or of the day,  
Come, as they will; and many a time  
they come,  
Until this earth he walks on seems not  
earth,  
This light that strikes his eyeball is  
not light,  
This air that strikes his forehead is not  
air,  
But vision—yes, his very hand and  
foot  
In moments when he feels he cannot  
die,  
And knows himself no vision to him-  
self,  
Nor the high God a vision, nor that  
one  
Who rose again.'

We have seen this passage thus ably paraphrased by a competent critic:

'Our only knowledge of material reality comes from our duties and our needs; we are obliged to act toward things as if they were real; but the moment action ceases and thought begins, then reality begins to evaporate; all turns to dreams; we are certain of nothing but the *cogito ergo sum*, the existence of self as a thinking being; and on this certainty we build up further certainties—first, our immortality, next the being

of God; lastly, the truth of Christianity.' The commentary seems a very fair one, and such a commentary is often wanted. When one of the periodicals published 'Lucretius,' it was found necessary in the next number to give an essay to explain it. Mr. Tennyson's views, both on the ethical side and on the dogmatic side, appear to be 'correct' enough, and even orthodox, and, therefore, the little philosophical poem, not of a very intelligible kind, called 'the Higher Pantheism,' need not cause any alarm. His system appears to be founded on doubt, and sometimes readily lends itself to scepticism. And the poem of the 'Higher Pantheism,' when disintegrated and analysed—a process with which we will not trouble our readers—is, in point of fact, no Pantheism at all, whether of a 'Higher' or lower type.

But of all our English writers there is none whose influence has been wider and more remarkable than Mr. Carlyle's. There is not now among the youth of England the same *furor* for Carlyle that there once was when the said youth talked Carlylese, and went about the world bragging of being 'earnest.' We recollect a sort of young man who bragged about 'earnestness' in a most insincere way, and protested against 'cant' with the greatest cant imaginable. Yet a feeling of sympathy and affection has long been growing up for the old philosopher of Chelsea, even among those who were most averse to his philosophy; and it is increasingly felt that he is a real, increasing, and a beneficial influence in the country. Whenever from Cheyne Walk he breaks silence, and discusses any topic of the day, men of all classes pause to listen to him. Yet when we endeavour accurately to guess the nature of his achievement, we own to the

sense of a certain amount of failure and disappointment. The most serious rôle that Mr. Carlyle has played is that of the historian, and here he has declined in a retrogressive order. The History of the French Revolution is a series of lurid pictures which almost awfully affect the imagination, and are thoroughly realistic. The apology for Cromwell is by no means of equal value, and is an apology even for the bloodthirsty atrocities of Dundalk. But perhaps the Life of Frederick the Great is the main failure. Mr. Carlyle sought for, and hoped he had obtained, a hero. He must by this time suspect that his hero is a very pretty rascal. He has never fairly grappled with the burglarious seizure of Silesia which was the *causa causans* of the Seven Years' War. After all we suspect that Mr. Carlyle must fall back on his earlier works as his most permanent source of renown. To how many of us did the first reading of the 'Miscellanies' open up the first view into the German world of thought? Nothing has ever surpassed such papers as those on Novalis and Jean Paul Richter, and where are there more genuine bits of criticism than the papers on Boswell and Burns. Carlyle had much deeper insight than Macaulay into the true characters and lives of Boswell and Johnson, and the sheer cleverness of Macaulay is left quite behind. But it is not so much as a teacher as a moralist that the influence of Carlyle has been most felt. Be true, be simple, be honest, be intelligible, is his evangel; all copybook sentences, truly, but to use his own phraseology, evermore to be rehearsed before the immensities and the eternities, ever in the new dialect of new times to be rewritten, redescribed, rejoice in his disciples.

We should not shrink from giving Mr. Carlyle formal entrance into the ranks of the philosophers. If he had to classify himself—which he would probably rather not do—he would be a transcendentalist opposed to the empiricism or experimentalism of the school of Mr. Mill; and, as we have pointed out, our belief is that Mr. Tennyson would not be far from him. This is the explanation of Mr. Carlyle's eternities, eternal veracities, eternal justice, and the like. Indeed, those who have never read of the Hamiltonian philosophy have had the conviction and the doctrine of necessary truths brought home to them by the intense earnestness of Mr. Carlyle. To take just one citation from him: 'To speak a little pedantically, there is a science of dynamics in man's fortunes and nature as well as of mechanics. There is a science which treats of and particularly addresses the primary, unmodified forces and energies of man, the mysterious springs of love, and fear, and wonder, of enthusiasm, poetry, and religion, all which have a truly vital and *infinite* character, as well as a science which particularly addresses the *finite* modified developments of them, when they take the shape of immediate "mobiles" as holes of reward or as fear of punishment. Now it is certain that in former times the wise men, the enlightened lambs of their kind, who appeared generally as moralists, poets, and priests, did, without neglecting the mechanical province, deal chiefly with the dynamical.' This is genuine Carlyliism. Mr. Carlyle must rejoice in his disciples.

'The words of Pyrrhus to his Epirotes, "Ye are my wings," express,' says Niebuhr, 'the feeling of a zealous teacher towards

hearers whom he loves, and whose whole souls take part in his discourse.' The conviction that he has been an immense force—perhaps the greatest living force we have—in stimulating and elevating the minds of men who make the common mind of the country, must be very sweet to him. Mr. Carlyle is a great leader and teacher of men. How grand is that teaching which he first taught himself before teaching it to others: 'Do the duty which lies nearest thee, which thou knowest to be a duty . . . . Yes, here, in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal; work it out therefrom; and working, believe, live, be free.' The personality of Carlyle is never doubtful in his writings; he himself is *Teufelsdröckti*; he himself *Smelfungus*. He is not a metaphysician; indeed, he quaintly compares the metaphysician to the 'Irish saint who swam across the channel carrying his head in his teeth,' and he gravely adds that the feat has never been repeated. But he is a downright philosopher—utterly wrong in the theory of hero-worship which is the centre of his system—but with infinite meanings lurking in his cloudy style, and with strong sense and genius, if not much love, if not much patience, in his views of his fellow-countrymen, 'seventeen millions—mostly fools.'

We have spoken of great thinkers, Ruskin, Tennyson, Carlyle, but there are other thinkers, whom we don't regard as great, but of whom we must take account. The story goes that the philosopher Kepler having delayed coming down to his supper, his wife, who was something of a shrew, took him to task for keeping her waiting. He excused himself by telling her he had got so absorbed in

thinking of the theory of 'the fortuitous concourse of atoms,' that he had forgotten the salad she had prepared. Katherine naturally asked for an explanation of this odd theory. He replied, 'Suppose that from all eternity there had been flying about atoms of vinegar, and atoms of oil, and atoms of lettuce, you perceive that in time we might have had a salad.' 'Ay, ay,' said his wife, 'all that might be, but you wouldn't get one so nicely dressed as this.' Madame Kepler's argument might hold very good for those who, like Alphonso, might have created a much better world if their judgment had been consulted. The argument, for instance, that the human eye is not the result or intelligence, the whole of the opposition to the argument for design might be very relevant to this anecdote. The false lights of philosophy seem willing enough to work out speculation into action, and show us that some curious aberrations of conduct are connected with their errors in ethics and reasoning. One would-be philosopher has written an essay which he calls 'Euthanasia,' in which he proposes that in all cases of hopeless or painful illness the physician may administer chloroform or some other anæsthetic, which may destroy consciousness at once, and put the sufferer to a quick and painless death. We may whisper with bated breath that the cure is by no means unknown when doctors have actually done something of the kind. A judge on circuit in the last century was actually asked whether, in certain cases, a patient's head might not be kept for a certain time between the bed and mattress. The judge immediately gave his opinion that such an action would be wilful murder. A practical answer would

be that there are so many instances of recovery, even in the most desperate cases where the doctors have abandoned hope. The utter impatience of all physical suffering, the hard thought of God and destiny, the blank hopelessness and unbelief, give some of the worst features of our times. There is a gentleman who has given notice of a motion at a philosophical society, that, under certain limitations, infanticide is a very useful institution, and ought to be recognized and permitted. Mr. Mill once got into trouble by circulating some of his practical notions.

We are not swimming in deep waters. We are only paddling about in the nearer bay. In order to compare varieties of opinion, we will just take one subject in moral philosophy with which most of us have some experience, probably a highly unpleasing experience. That subject shall be the conscience, one that comes as close as may be to all of us, and the different views of the subject will fling a curious light on the history of contemporary opinion. Mr. Darwin, following such German writers as Buchner and Vogt, has hit out a theory of his own. He spoke of the moral sense of animals. He qualifies himself by saying that he does not wish 'to maintain that every strictly social animal, if its intellectual and social faculties were to become as active and as highly developed as man, would acquire exactly the same moral sense as ours.' But the only reason that he gives for this is that we are not under 'the same conditions.' Consequently, all moralities depend on 'conditions of life.' Of course such a theory denies that there is any standard of morality or any necessary truths in ethics.

Mr. Bain, whom some people

are pleased to consider the greatest philosopher we have, has promulgated a theory of conscience which is probably only one degree less absurd than Mr. Darwin's. It is one of the latest and least favourable forms of the Utilitarian theory in morals. He simply defines conscience as being the *opinion of the majority*. Moral truth is to be settled by the process of counting noses. He refers conscience to 'authority,' or 'punishment,' such authority being exercised, such punishment being inflicted, by 'the major part of every community.' According to him conscience is an artificial system of controlling actions. Every community, for self-existence' sake, lays down rules and coerces obedience by punishment. Mr. Bain says: 'It is the familiarity with the *regions* of compulsion and suffering, constantly increasing until resistance is overborne, that plants in the infant and youthful mind the first germs of the sense of obligation. It is not often that a philosophical argument is susceptible of being brought to the *reductio ad absurdum*, but we believe that this is the case in the present instance. It might, however, be observed that if the conscience only took cognizance of offences answerable to human tribunals, then the theory might be colourable. But conscience legislates on the quality of the thoughts and feelings and desires which are altogether removed from human punishment, and even from human knowledge. A hundred times a day a man shapes his conduct by the instinctive whisper of conscience, quite independently of the authority or punishment of the majority. Suppose immoral actions being enforced by the majority—and history shows us that this is no violent supposition—then we should have the



absurdity of man acting against his conscience in the ordinary sense in obedience to his conscience in Mr. Bain's sense. Or take the case of those who are prisoners, or who suffer 'for conscience.' Take the case of a martyr like Sir Thomas More, the Romanist, or Bishop Latimer, the Protestant and as one mounts the scaffold and the other the pyre, let us ask what is the meaning of their thus suffering for conscience' sake—and let us be satisfied if we can write the answer that their conscience only means the opinion of the majority, the dread of the punishment of the stronger power—that stronger power that will remit the penalty on their obedience. One of the most recent of the late Mr. Maurice's works was one on the 'Conscience,' in which he controverts the conclusions of Mr. Bain in a very different tone to that in which he attacked the late Dean Mansel, who described him as an unjust and ungenerous opponent. Mr. Maurice appeals to facts. He denies that any dread of punishment could induce our soldiers and sailors to do and endure all that they have. He alludes to the case of our brave soldiers who formed a line and sank with the Birkenhead. 'I need not tell you that these soldiers as little dreamed of doing a great and meritorious act as of escaping punishment. They simply did what they ought to do. Their business was to go to the bottom, and they went.' Mr. Maurice's work on conscience is slight, and for any adequate treatment of the subject we must go back to Butler's famous writings on Human Nature, those three immortal sermons which must very strongly have puzzled the little congregation in the Rolls Chapel. There is an exotic, erratic poet, who speaks of those who exchange

'The lilies and languors of virtue  
For the roses and raptures of vice.'

So different to the true knight,

'Who revered his conscience as a  
king.'

There they will find that though the virtues may be overthrown by the passions—as the stately senators by the ruthless Goths—yet conscience is enthroned supreme amid our faculties, and her whispers predict all ultimate arbitration. I think I shall have done a good service to my readers, if I could only induce them, instead of being confused among the conflicting voices of our modern philosophers, to acquire that mental discipline, and that introduction into the deepest subjects which Butler gives. One of Butler's private speculations—whether nations may not go mad as well as individuals—must often occur to the student of modern history, and is well worthy of being worked out by one of the *illuminati*. It would be a useful rule that no one should be allowed to talk of Hamilton and Mill unless he had been grounded in the 'Analogy' and the 'Novum Organum.'

When we complained that philosophy hardly received recognition in England, we ought to have remembered that there is at least one source from which we obtain a perennial supply of philosophers. And there philosophers have always had the advantage of a liberal tincture of Butler and Bacon, not to mention Plato and Aristotle, with whom many of our philosophers have, we suspect, a somewhat shadowy and remote acquaintance. These are the young men who are fresh from the honour examinations of the first classical schools at Oxford. It does not very much matter whether they took a first or a third

—for, singularly enough, three of our best thinkers, Whately, John Henry Newman, and Archbishop Thomson, have been only third-class men—but the training is of a very peculiar kind, which it is somewhat difficult for non-Oxonians to understand. But the clever Oxonian always adds an immense amount of modern philosophical reading to the old books. He reads up the metaphysical Scotchmen, knows something at least about Kant and Hegel, and could pass a fair examination in Cousins and Comte. He is especially a great man for 'modern ideas.' His special function is to bring modern thought into relation with ancient ideas. He sparkles and glitters over examination papers, whereas perhaps some young examiner has sought to glorify himself by showing how thoroughly 'up' he is in all the philosophical notions of the day, abreast with all modern ideas. Mr. Tennyson has not published a poem forty-eight hours before the astute examiner has selected bits for Latin elegiacs or Greek iambics. The Oxford examination, twice a year, shows sets of remarkable papers, essays of the 'Saturday Review,' or the 'Times' order, full of point and power. In fact, such men are just the material from which good leader-writers and reviewers are made. Such men may not be leaders of our thinkers; but they at least form the main body of the army of our philosophers, and impregnate the public with philosophical ideas. To many men their intellectual pursuits are the only avenues open to promotion. Time was when the course of the brilliant undergraduate was watched with interest in London, and there was a seat in parliament ready for him as soon as he was competent to take it. In a reformed House of Commons there are no chances of

the kind; the race of orators and statesmen seem dying out; a seat is the expensive appendage to great wealth, and the House becomes more and more a public board for the transaction of office business. Then the clever graduate, often debarred from social distinction, betakes himself to the highest forms of intellectual work, which we hold to be philosophy. At the same time the Oxford system is open to criticism as having a sophistical element about it. The clever undergraduate of one-and-twenty plays with names and subjects as counters; he is well read in all the criticisms that concerns them, but he is not well read in the authors themselves, on whom the criticisms are based. He may master them thoroughly, but he certainly has not mastered them at the time when he is expected to answer terse questions, and write brilliant papers about them. The young Oxonian is at least well acquainted with what the Germans call *Die Sophistik*. They are acquainted with that remarkable corruption of the intellect which prevailed in Greece in the fourth century before our era, when the mind became venal, and was to be bought and sold as a mean instrument for personal purposes—the sentiment, that is exhibited at the English bar, finding a full expression in all paths of life. And imagine that there is a certain kind of insincerity and socialism in that incomplete course of study to which the highest University distinctions are awarded. Tennyson had his 'black-browed sophist' in view when he wrote the lines:

'Smiling as the master smiles on one  
That is not of his school, nor any school  
Save that where blind and naked ignorance  
Delivers brawling judgments unashamed  
On all things all day long.

This flaw has been pointed out





Drawn by E. Buckman.]

# THE WISHING WELL.

[See Page 65.]

by some of the ablest *alumni* of Oxford, and the best wishers to their Zion. Still, it is a system which often produces its richest fruitage when the examination era is over, and which has produced such men as Hamilton and Ferrier. In any literary history of England, it will not be forgotten that almost the only formal philosophical training given in England is in the Honours school at Oxford. Cambridge excels her sister in scholarship, and probably in exact scholarship, but she has somehow found it impossible to graft upon her own system the peculiar honour-system of Oxford. We have pointed

out the defects incident to our becoming philosophers; but we might safely add that even these defects stimulate intellectual growth, and after all progress is the only safe condition, the only true law for the human soul. We can but hope that those studies that form the training of the most acute and cultivated minds of the youth of England will become more popularised among them all, and even that the sisters and sweet-hearts of our Oxonian will learn to take an intelligent interest in the studies of our young philosophers at the old University.

#### THE WISHING-WELL.

WHAT! you are come, despite your boast  
You are not superstitious?  
No faith in fairies, nor in ghosts,  
Nor Wishing-Well? Delicious!

I know you better, and I hide  
Within the hollow oak;  
To the clear spring your wish confide—  
Nor spring, nor I, will joke.

I see you've culled the small blue flower  
I told you of last night;  
You come, too, at the sunset hour,  
Determined to be right.

You fix your eyes upon the ground,  
Are counting nine times nine;  
My mysteries your thoughts have bound—  
Approach, sweet Geraldine.

There, now upon the steps you stand,  
You gaze upon the wave,  
The flowers poised within your hand,  
Why, Geraldine, how grave!

You lightly laughed at all I said,  
About the mystic spell,  
And thrice you shook your pretty head  
Against the Wishing-Well.



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*The Wishing-Well.*

Some stronger faith enthral's you now,  
 Your mirth owns some eclipse ;  
 A shade of thought is on your brow,  
 No smile upon your lips.

Your face reflected there you trace.  
 And, by some fancy's freak,  
 As you gaze down upon your face  
 The waters seem to speak.

' Hail ! fairest form of womanhood  
 That we have ever pressed  
 On summer eve, amid the wood,  
 Upon our peaceful breast.

' For many a maid has lingered here,  
 And all her secrets told,  
 And troubled us with lying tear,  
 While wishing but for gold.

' And gallant youths from town and hall  
 Have given us their trust :  
 But, ah ! their love was hollow all,  
 Another name for lust.

' We grant no wish that is not pure,  
 No hope for selfish gain ;  
 We love no love that can't endure—  
 No pleasure void of pain.

' And now thrice welcome we bid you ;  
 We know the sacred sign  
 That marks a maiden pure and true,  
 As you are, Geraldine !

' So drop the flower from your hand,  
 We hold it fondly given ;  
 Pause but one moment on the strand,  
 And breathe your wish to Heaven.'

The flower falls ! the Well receives  
 Your gift—and, also, mine ;  
 No withered buds ; no Autumn leaves—  
 Bright blossoms, Geraldine.

I hold your hand—to hold your heart  
 Soon in the marriage spell ;  
 And thus we vow no more to part,  
 Beside the Wishing-Well !

CHARLES LAURENCE YOUNG.

## UNIVERSITY SKETCHES.

*My First Visit to Newmarket, and its Fortunes.*

I SHOULD say that there was no racecourse in the world, the pleasant features of whose characteristics as a place of sport are so long retained upon the memory, as the breezy Heath at Newmarket. Spite of increasing years, spite of a certain indifference to the pastime which is there enacted (that in most cases middle age brings with it), still the mere mention of the sport-suggesting name of Newmarket sends the thoughts galloping back at full speed to that (except during the time of race meetings) very dull, little, old-fashioned town, with its one long street, its White Hart, Rutland Arms, and other hostels, flat and empty for weeks and months in the year, brimming over with guests, noise, and excitement for a few days only, each now and again. That name—Newmarket, sends the thoughts galloping back, I say, to the Four-Mile Stable, the T. Y. C., the Beacon, Cesarewich, Cambridgeshire, Four Mile, Yearling, and other courses, to the drags, tandems, dog-carts, to say nothing of equestrians coming spinning along that last straight mile which leads from Cambridge by the sporting Heath, to this citadel of horses, bets, and betting men. Do not the thoughts wander back too, not only to the pastime of far-famed Newmarket, but also to the pretty Hebe who presided over the liquid department of one of its well-known caravanserais? Am I not, whilst meditating on these things once again the careless, happy youth, imbibing cherry brandy, and half-chaffing, half-flirting with, and wholly making

a kind of love to, that fair damsel? Do not memories of gloves, rings, and pins, lost in bets to this syren, come floating across my mind (for somehow no one could ever win from Nelly), culminating, indeed, all these reminiscences with the recollection of that happy day, when this blue-eyed maiden rewarded my many losses with the loan of 'her very own,' as she assured me—her very own white pony, prince of hacks, for the Heath, whereon I rode in full turfite glory for the whole of one Houghton Meeting? Ah, I wonder, with my enlarged experience, if I should think beautiful the once so much admired Nelly! Beautiful, do I say? Pshaw! Could she now appear before me, even in her most engaging humour, and most charming attire, I should pronounce her doubtless rather plain, and decidedly ill-educated and vulgar. Well, 'Where ignorance is bliss it is folly to be wise,' so says the old proverb; and, maybe, even a barmaid's chaffing conversation had perhaps a humanizing effect upon those who only saw and conversed day after day for many weeks during Term time with the members of their own sex.

Well, then, Newmarket, spite of thy cheating, roping, pulling, legging, selling, nobbling, welching, and each all and several your grievous iniquities, I love thee still—love to dwell on the pleasant reminiscences which surround the mention of thy name—love thee as the place where I have spent many a joyous hour—love thee as a watchword reminding me of friends and pastimes

now numbered with the past. We boast, indeed, of our national carnival, Epsom, on the Derby Day; we talk of royal Ascot, lordly Goodwood, canny York, and Doncaster, all places to be proud of, and, indeed, unique in their several ways; but for real business in racing, uncombined with any other attraction, for sporting *par excellence*, for the race, the whole race, and nothing but the race, Newmarket beats every other place in the world. There may be seen England's national pastime in its greatest perfection. At Newmarket, say what any one may against it, racing is a business; it is the genius of the place, and we can call it by no other name. But to come to my first visit to this wide-awake, and, as to character, somewhat raffish little town. It was the beginning of my second year at college, the commencement of the October Term, and I had arrived in Cambridge only a few days previously, to enjoy the ease, comfort, and dignity which a scholarship at St. Margaret's College—one of the most lucrative ones in the University (I mean the scholarship, not the college)—gave me, when I received a telegram from my friend and old schoolfellow Marshman, a sporting lieutenant in one of her Majesty's regiments of foot Guards, telling me that he had met with a severe accident, by which he had sustained a compound fracture of his thigh; and begging me to proceed at once to London, as he wished to see me on most important and particular business, which admitted of no delay. At this stage of my narrative perhaps I may mention how it was that such terms of intimacy and friendship existed between myself and Marshman—a friendship and intimacy cemented by much stronger ties than mere schoolboy affection. Sir Reginald Marsh-

man, for the gallant but unfortunate officer (as far as his accident was concerned) was a baronet, owner of Chilton Harolds Abbey, a beautiful old place, and a somewhat heavily-encumbered estate of from ten to fifteen thousand a year. The late proprietor, Sir Reginald's father, was a fine sportsman of the old school, who always had a string of racehorses in training, was master of the Belton Hounds, which he hunted without a subscription, and kept open house for the whole county side, every one of which amusements, it must be admitted, was well calculated to assist in laying on the Marshman estates the somewhat heavy burden, under which not they only, but my friend, the guardsman, groaned. But a few months previous to the time of my story, by the death of his sporting parent, Sir Reginald had come into possession of his now somewhat out-at-elbows patrimony. My father, as rector of the parish, had been the late baronet's greatest friend; indeed, they were boon companions, for the churchman was not one whit behind the layman in his fondness for sport, and also in the happy knack of getting rid of the current coin of the realm. Brought up from childhood on terms of the greatest intimacy, sharing the same sports, governess, and tutor in our juvenile days, and being placed in the same form, and flogged by the same master in the schoolboy period which succeeded the time of petticoats and nursery and schoolroom discipline, no wonder that as we grew towards manhood Reginald and I were the most inseparable of cronies, and that we both felt the separation which the pursuit of my friend's profession of arms, and my career at the University had entailed upon us. Good, kind, jolly old Sir Augustus Marshman had been

more than the mere guardian to my sister and myself, a post which my father on his death-bed some few years back had asked him to fill. He had been the kindest and most considerate of friends; indeed, he had well supplied the loss we had sustained in the death of both parents, which happened within a few months of each other. It was at Chilton Harolds Abbey that we found a home, and it was the Rectory of Chilton Harolds which was being held for me until the time when I was either old enough, or felt sufficiently sober minded to take orders. Under the kind and loving care of dear, old-fashioned, motherly Lady Marshman, my pretty Sister Susan, the *fiancée* of her son, Sir Reginald, met with the most delightful chaperonage, and the most ample protection during the necessary absences of her brother at the University. So much, then, to account for my friendship for the young guardsman; and now to an uninterrupted account of my first visit to Newmarket and its fortunes.

To obtain an *exeat* from my tutor, and start for the gay metropolis immediately on Reginald Marshman's summons, was with me the work of a few hours; and the evening of the very day I received my future brother-in-law's telegram saw me closeted with him at his comfortable lodgings in St. James's Street. I found my old schoolfellow in bed, and suffering a good deal of pain from his broken limb, which catastrophe had been caused by a severe fall from a vicious horse, who, after having thrown my poor friend, rolled upon him, thus occasioned the misfortune.

'My dear fellow,' he exclaimed, in a voice broken with suffering, as I entered the apartment he used as a bedchamber. 'My dear

fellow, I am so glad to see you. You find me here, laid up with a broken thigh, and suffering horribly—all occasioned by that confounded brute, Hotspur. I told the poor old governor he was no good when he bought him; and now, bad luck to him, he has brought me to grief. But there's no use crying over spilt milk. Oh, my leg!' And he gave a groan of agony. 'I should not so much care about the accident nor the pain either, but, bad scan to it, of all times in the year—it could not possibly have occurred at a more unfortunate one for me—the commencement of the hunting season, and next week, too, the Houghton Meeting at Newmarket. You know,' he continued, 'the dear old dad, amongst other contrivances to get rid of any superfluous cash he might have about him, as if hounds and hunters were not sufficiently expensive luxuries, must needs be a patron of the Turf; and here am I, one of the poorest county gentlemen in the kingdom, saddled with a racing stud of twenty horses, or thereabouts, most of them entered in some confounded race or other, for which, I suppose, I must run them, as all the nominations being made in the trainer's, not my father's name, none are rendered void by his death.'

'But, my dear Reginald,' I exclaimed, 'why on earth do you not send them all to Tattersall's, sell them by auction for what they will fetch, and thus get rid of the expense and responsibility. I would give up the whole concern—horses, trainer, engagements, jockeys, and everything.'

'Well, so I did intend to do,' answered the young baronet, rather pettishly; 'but old Wall, the trainer, overpersuaded me to retain them all till after the Houghton Meeting, as he says, if

he only keeps well, Dragon Fly is a downright certainty for the Cambridgeshire, and, maybe, we shall pull off a few of the other stakes with some of the rest of the horses. On the strength of this information, I have backed the said Dragon Fly for a pretty stiff sum, for a poor man like me, in hopes of being able, with luck, to pay some of my training expenses; but—for there is always a but in every bit of seeming luck which happens to us Marshmans—but yesterday I received this really wonderful specimen of calligraphy from old Wall, who seems to have fallen amongst the Philistines at Newmarket (to which place he is gone with the horses to be ready for the meeting); and it is pretty evident, if something is not done at once, and somebody with a head on his shoulders is not at hand to advise and direct matters, Dragon Fly and my money will all go to the bad together.'

As my friend concluded, he handed to me his trainer's laconic letter, and then lay back on his bed exhausted by the pain of body and anxiety of mind from which he was suffering.

'Honoured Sir,' ran old Wall's somewhat blotted and queerly spelt epistle. 'Honoured Sir—Me and the horses arrived here safe three days ago, all well, specially Dragon Fly, who is fit as a fiddle and ready to run for a million. But they be queer chaps, they be, about this here Newmarket, and I 'spects aint after no good—a peeking and spying about after our horses. I cotched two chaps a walking about the yard yesterday as if the place were their own; and if that rascal Billy Dukes, who I engaged as an exner boy, aint a deep file, well, honoured sir, then I'll eat him, gaiters and all, that's flat. But this aint the worse—no by a goodish bit; there's

some plan about to get at Dragon Fly, and for the life of me I can't get at no bottom to it, tho' I'd give a year's wages, and more, to circumlocute the rogues. Why, honoured sir, just you look at the betting, and you will soon see there's something a gate; why, if our horse aint up and down like a bucket in a well. If you could only come down here till after the races, I do think we might manage to diddle these wide-awake coves in this here downy place; but two heads is better, they say, nor one, any day of the week, and you always was precious sharp, you were, meaning no offence by saying so, honoured sir. You must please, sir, to come down; for, what with the horses, Billy Dukes, a watching to find out what they are up to here, and all the other lads to look after, my old head is fairly addled, and mischief will, I fear, come of it all. Hoping to see you very soon, so no more at this time from your 'bedient servant, Jeremiah Wall. Mr. Sir Reginald Marshman, Baronet, Esquire.'

'Well, what do you think of that for a nice mess?' inquired my companion, as, laying down the letter which I had been reading by the window, I returned, laughing, to his bed-side, and took a seat thereon.

'I don't see anything to laugh at,' he continued, crossly; 'rather a matter for tears with me—the loss of I don't know how much money. What a precious set of rascals these Newmarket fellows must be! Why, they would steal old Wall's eyes out of his head whilst he was wide awake, that they would! He is, I believe, one of the best trainers and managers of horses in England; but he is no more fit to cope with the touts and legs who swarm at Newmarket, than he is fit to be Archbishop of Canterbury. Poor old



Wall! he is as honest as the day, and as innocent as a child. Oh, what a fool I have been,' groaned Marshman, 'not to get rid of the whole concern before it came to this!'

'Don't be angry with me for laughing at old Wall's letter,' I replied; 'it is enough to make the cat laugh, I am sure. But seriously, Reggy, I am very, very sorry. What is to be done?' For I was quite at a loss for any suggestion to make, to help my friend out of his difficulties.

'Well, I don't know, old fellow,' answered my friend. 'I am in a nice hole; for I cannot go to old Wall: the doctor says, if I stir, he will not answer for my life; and it was because two heads are better than one, as Wall truly observes, that I sent for you to advise me. Moreover, I can trust you, and that is more than I could most fellows, where horses and bets were concerned.'

'Anything in my power to help you, my poor Reggy,' I replied; 'but really, I fear I am even less able to cope with these touts and blackguards than good old Wall.'

'I am not so sure of that, my boy,' returned Marshman, looking up more cheerfully than before, 'as if some bright thought had struck him—'I am not so sure of that; you are a very clever fellow when you like. Did you not get a scholarship, or a fellowship, or a something-ship, not long ago, licking, I don't know how many swells out of the field, and ain't you going to be a wrangler, or disputer, or fighter, or something pugilistic, at Cambridge, by-and-by? I am not so sure you might not do a great deal better down at Newmarket, looking after the horses, than I could myself.'

'But, my dear Reginald!' I gasped out—for though, to a certain extent, fond of sport, it

almost took my breath away—the bare idea of a leading scholar at St. Margaret's College, Cambridge, that noble institution, second to none in the University, a future fellow, as I fondly hoped some day to find myself, an undergraduate known even in those early days of his university career to be aspiring after high mathematical and classical honours: the idea of such a one, taking charge of the racing stud of a sporting officer in the Guards, and laying his head alongside of old Wall's grizzly poll to 'circumlocute,' as he called it, the touts and rascals, and to bring Dragon Fly, fit as a fiddle, to the post on the eventful day of the race for the Cambridgeshire!—nothing could possibly be more preposterous, I thought; for what did I know about the tricks and dodges of the far-famed Heath? I had had other fish to fry, and other books to study, besides Ruff's 'Guide to the Turf.' If old Wall was green, slow, and innocent amongst the wide awake, what, in the name of wonder, was I? Why, a very *gobe-mouche* amongst the simple ones. 'My dear Reginald,' then I gasped out, 'what a most ridiculous idea! You know I would serve you in any way that lies in my power, not for your own sake alone, but for Susan's; only, how, in the name of goodness, am I, who know hardly anything of racing matters, save what I have occasionally heard from you, and have read in the papers—how am I to contrive to out-manceuvre a set of fellows, whose whole life is one continued scene of robbing and cheating?'

'I have thought of all that,' said my friend; 'and your being totally unknown upon the Turf, and also residing in Cambridge, an undergraduate to boot, will not excite the suspicions of those who are trying to get at my horse, even

if you are seen holding frequent converse and communion with old Wall. Besides, who knows, you might find out what these fellows are really after, and perhaps assist in preventing the accomplishment of their nefarious designs?

'Well,' I answered, after a few moments' reflection, 'needs must when a certain gentleman drives.' It will not do for you to lose all the money for which, you say, you have backed Dragon Fly, if it can be prevented; besides, I must say, I should like, if possible, to out-manceuvre these scoundrels, and prevent them making a prey of Sir Reginald Marshman, as they have done, doubtless, of so many other young men.'

'That's right, old chap!' exclaimed my quondam schoolfellow, looking now much happier and at ease than he had hitherto done during our interview — 'that's right, old chap! I know, at any rate, you will do your best, and not allow an old chum, if you can stop it, to be defrauded and robbed.'

'I was going to make one condition, Marshman, when you interrupted me,' I said, 'and it was this—that you leave the matter, now I have undertaken it, entirely in my hands, and don't bother yourself any more about the business, but get well as fast as you can; or we shall have your good mother and Susan in a nice state about you. If the worst comes to the worst, and Dragon Fly is beaten, we can make up the money to pay your losses, some way or other, between us, and you can sell the stud, too, and thus get rid of the whole concern. Do you write to old Wall by to-night's post, saying you have placed everything in my hands to act for you as may seem best to me, and that I shall call, to have a talk

with him, on my way from town to Cambridge to-morrow afternoon.'

I spent the rest of that day and the morning of the following one with my sick friend; nor did we again revert to the subject of his stud until I was on the eve of departure; when Marshman put into my hands his betting-book, saying,

'Old fellow, as you are going to look after my horses, you must look after my bets too, and make the best of them you can. They say you are a deuce of a fellow at mathematics, so I should think you would be a good hand at figures in the ring. Here is also what will gain you admission into the enclosure and subscription rooms; so do whatever you think best, and luck go with you.' Thus saying, we parted.

As I journeyed to Newmarket on my way back to Cambridge, my thoughts were full of the business—a very foolish one as I thought—which I had undertaken. 'How on earth,' I kept saying to myself, 'can I prevent these scoundrels from getting at Reginald's horse? What can I do to ensure him winning this race?' I had said these words over to myself many times—I had thought them over so many more, that at length they had the same soporific effect, as the idea of the celebrated flock of sheep, going through a gap, one after another, is said to have upon the wakeful, and I fell into a doze. During the period that I slept that kind of wakeful sleep, which to a certain extent permits a knowledge of what is going on around, the words, 'The Fly,' seemed to be constantly striking upon my ear, amidst the buzz of the earnest conversation which my companions in the compartment (two flashily-dressed men of a very would-be sporting stamp) were holding. This now to me familiar sentence appeared to my comatose

brain at that time, to be repeated an infinite number of times, and, in my dreamy, listless state, I imagined that some trick of fancy was at play, and that the thoughts in reference to my friend's affairs, which had filled my mind before I fell into a doze, were still actively at work within me, and were producing the result, which I have endeavoured to describe. At a station before we arrived at Newmarket, the two men got out. This circumstance, and demand being made for the production of my ticket, roused me from my lethargy. As the train sped on its way, now thoroughly awakened from my slumbers, I was gazing in a purposeless manner round the carriage, when my eye lighted upon a piece of paper, folded in the form of a note, which was lying at the bottom of the compartment, where they of the flashy apparel had so lately been seated. Mechanically I picked it up, curiosity led me to open it, and no sooner had I done so than my gaze fell on the haunting familiar words, 'The Fly,'—that name which had been sounding so provokingly in my ears throughout the whole of my journey. I needed no other inducement to make myself master of its contents; those mysterious words had so roused all the inquisitive part of my nature, that I did not hesitate for a moment to peruse the document I held in my hand. It ran as follows:—

'DEAR CAPTAIN,

'A line from his Grace to say that The Fly is meant, and the young swell backs him for a dollop. Mind what you are about, for the horse is bound to win, if nothing can be done. You know it is safe to lay against a dead one. His Grace reports Saturday as the morning of trial, Four-mile Stable,

seven A.M.; so keep a sharp look out. Judge for yourself; but if the event comes off as they expect, Monday night, at the latest, for the dose of physic. Trusting entirely to you—as it is not the first time you have doctored a winner. Hoping to hear by the wires at latest on Tuesday morning—Yours, as you prove yourself,

'JOE.'

'What an extraordinary epistle!' I thought; 'how curiously these everlasting words, "The Fly," are for ever crossing my path!' With these reflections, I consigned the note to my pocket-book, meditating, as I wended my way out of the station—for I had arrived at Newmarket—whether or no this piece of paper, of which I had become possessed, could have any reference to Reginald Marshman's horse Dragon Fly; and, moreover, if I had thus accidentally obtained a clue to some dark plot whereby that horse was, as his trainer had termed it, to be 'got at,' and in this way be prevented winning the Cambridgeshire in the following week. This being my first visit to the little sporting town situate, as the advertisements call it, on the borders of the counties of Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, I was obliged to impress into my service a small but shrewd-looking urchin whom I found playing at pitch-halfpenny with some equally wide-awake-looking companions just outside the station gates; and to induce him, under the promise of the liberal reward of sixpence, to show me the way to the stables, where the faithful Wall had deposited himself and his precious charges. As I followed my juvenile guide up the now deserted street, I could not help thinking to myself, surely this dull, stupid, deadly-lively little town is not the pandemo-

nium it is represented to be!—surely, not half the iniquity can be transacted here which is currently reported to be carried on. It is a gross libel on the place! why, all seems as flat as ditch-water, and everything around as quietly sedate and ponderously slow as the close of a cathedral city. I had certain reasons afterwards to alter my opinions, but such were my reflections as I wended my way, for the first time, up the street of this sporting *locale*. I found the old trainer had fixed his quarters at the farthest end of the town, closely abutting upon the Heath, and that he had engaged, for the accommodation of himself and his charges, a cottage and set of stables forming a quadrangle, having a paved yard in the centre, and approached by a short gravel drive, terminated on the road-side by a pair of massive folding-doors. A strong pull at the door-bell, the handle of which was attached to a short chain, and hung outside, as is not unfrequently seen at the entrances to some of our gaols, produced a loud peal which broke on the evening breeze in solemn tones. A harsh voice from the inside demanded my business, and upon my replying, that I wished to see Mr. Wall, a smaller door in the large folding one was opened, and the well-known, short, round, fat form and bandy legs of my friend's trainer stood before me. Pulling at his hat in an old-fashioned and respectful manner, as soon as he recognised me, the old man exclaimed—

'Eh, sir, then I'm mortal glad to see you; but how be Sir Reginald—sad business this about his accident; but step inside, sir, I be obliged to keep these big doors shut constant like, there is so many peeking, prying chaps about with their "how are your, Mr.

Wall—fine string of horses, yours, Mr. Wall—noble sportsman, Sir Reginald Marshman, Mr. Wall," till I'm sick to death of their jabber,' and here, my companion spit upon the ground, in token, I suppose, of his nausea and disgust.

As we walked side by side up the short drive which led to the stables, I asked after the health of the horses, which the trainer declared to be most satisfactory, winding up his eulogium on their beauty and condition, by an assurance that I should see them all directly, 'though, he feared, I know'd but little about such like things, as how should I, when I was so book learned as he'd been told.'

Though certainly not being well versed in stable secrets and stable management, I had not lived so long at Chilton Harolds Abbey, under the protection of its late sporting owner, nor had I been the bosom friend of its present possessor, without imbibing some little smattering of knowledge on such subjects, and it had rather been want of time to spare from my studies, than a lack of inclination which had made me forego the delights of hunting and other sporting pursuits. However, I refrained from making any reply to Wall's rather uncomplimentary remarks on my knowledge of horses, and horses' affairs, and followed the old man, who, taking a key from his pocket, opened the door of an adjacent stable and bid me enter.

'There, sir,' he exclaimed, as soon as we were fairly inside, and he had carefully closed the door; 'if that ere aint a beauty, I never seed one. Legs clean and fine as a colt's, coat like satin, eye like fire, quarters of a hunter, speed of a steam-engine—that's what I calls a race-horse, and no mistake.

Oh, if Sir Reginald could only see un, he knows a horse, he do, when he casts his eyes over un.'

'Well,' I exclaimed, as the trainer swept the clothing gently over the horse's quarters, 'he does seem a very perfect horse, is he the favourite for the Cambridgeshire, Dragon Fly?'

The old man stepped back a pace or two, looked carefully and scrutinizingly around, peeped through the key-hole, then picking up a straw from the litter beneath his feet transferred it to his mouth, came close up to my side, and hoarsely whispering in my ear, said, 'That's about the ticket, sir. How can you find any fault in un?'

As I certainly could not conscientiously do so, even had I felt disposed, I merely answered, 'Well, he is a fine animal, but will he win?'

'Will he win?' said he, of the handy legs, meditatively, chewing at his straw. 'Will a duck swim? Yes, sir, as sure as you are standing there if—' and the old man's face fell at the if—'if those rascals will but let un alone. Eh, sir,'—he went on with almost a whimper in his tone—'eh, sir, the turf b'ant what it were in my young days; eh, it were sport for gentlemen and aristocrats then, but now, what with the cheating, nobbling, roping, and pulling, it is only fit for blackguards and such as them.'

'Well,' I said, cheerfully, to encourage the ancient servitor, 'well, but, Wall, we must try, and stop these rascals from doing anything to the horse, for Sir Reginald has a very heavy book indeed upon the race, and it would be nearly ruin to him just now to lose so much money.'

'I be mortal sorry to hear on it,' replied my companion, 'mortal sorry these chaps are so desperate,

wide awake, cunning, and greedy, they'd sell their grandmother's bones to make ninepins of, and steal a man's teeth out of his head whilst he was wide awake, and he be none the wiser for it.'

It certainly did not seem a very happy prospect for my friend, that his chance of winning some ten thousand pounds depended upon an honest, but guileless, old country trainer, and a green, innocent youth from the adjacent university, being able to frustrate the knavish tricks of a set of fellows, gifted with such powers as those described by my companion; but still to encourage that worthy, I replied, 'Well, we must do our best for Sir Reginald's sake, that is all, and then we must trust to the chapter of accidents to pull him through, as the saying is.'

A pitying smile sat upon the old man's face, as, turning round to me, he merely gave a grunt which might mean either approval or the reverse, and taking up the horse's clothing busied himself with adjusting it. We visited several other boxes, and saw several other animals, some, as far as I could judge, very nice-looking horses indeed, but none approaching either in beauty or form to the Dragon Fly, the subject of all our thoughts and cares.

'None so good looking as Dragon Fly,' I said, as we approached the door of what I fervently hoped was the last stable to be inspected, for I was getting very sick of the business. 'None so good looking as Dragon Fly, eh, Wall?'

'Not within miles,' replied that worthy, 'not at no weight at all. What's six stone two to such a horse as that? You see, sir, the old master would run that horse, but half prepared, consequently, he was beaten shameful; and Sir Augustus wanted to sell un, but

I said, said I, he'll win a good stable yet, he will, so he kept on, and now he's in the Cambridgeshire at no weight at all to speak on, cause they thought he must be good for nought, he did run so mortal bad when he was brought out before.'

As Wall finished this speech we had entered a loose box and were standing alongside of what appeared to me, enveloped, as he was, in his clothing, the very identical Dragon Fly of which we had been speaking, so uncommonly like were the two animals.

'What is this?' I exclaimed. 'Why we have been here before; is not this our Cambridgeshire favourite again?' I looked fixedly at the horse. 'Yes, surely it is, is it not?'

A chuckling laugh, and a—

'Well, sir, they be somewhat alike, leastways, why should they not, seeing they are half brothers? But there be just as much difference between them as there is between a butcher's hack and the winner of the Derby. I calls that horse rubbish, I do. He'll never win no race, or no man a sovereign, and so I told Sir Reginald and his father, but they thought different.'

When I came to see the subject of our conversation stripped, and to examine him more critically, even to my unpractised, uninitiated eyes, he did seem, though very like in colour, height, and make, a different sort of animal altogether, being much weedier and lighter built in all respects than the redoubtable Dragon Fly. As I stood silently gazing on this half brother to our favourite, still struck with the strong likeness to his more perfect relative, and meditating painfully on the note in my pocket-book, and what was best to be done thereon, a brilliant thought flashed upon my mind,

and for the first time since I had so reluctantly undertaken the temporary management of my friend's racing affairs, a hope dawned upon my mind, that even innocent as we were, still old Wall, assisted by my counsel and advice, might defeat the machinations of the enemies of his pet, and by winning the Cambridgeshire stakes with him, his master's money might be made secure. Taking the old trainer gently by the arm, I led him from the stable, saying, 'Just send for a trap, to be here in half an hour to take me into Cambridge, and after that I want to speak a few words to you in your own room, if I can.'

At a shout for Billy Dukes, a cock-eyed, slouching, blackguard-looking youth made his appearance, who the trainer at once dismissed to the White Hart with an order for the trap to be at the stables in half an hour, and then led the way to the cottage in the midst of the stable yard, where he had taken up his abode.

As soon as we were safely inside, I exclaimed, 'From where, on earth, my good man, did you pick up that villainous-looking boy. Why, to judge by his appearance, he would rob a church.'

'Eh, no doubt on it, sir, that he would, and murder the parson too if he could get the chance. Why, you see, I was very short of a lad to help in the stables, and this un came (hearing as I wanted a boy) with a good recommend from the Hon. Captain Cowslip, and so I engaged un.'

'But there is no such name as Cowslip in the Peerage, I am sure,' I said, 'so depend upon it that it was a false character; therefore the sooner you get rid of the truculent-looking vagabond the better.'

'Well, I should have given un the sack afore this, you may



depend, sir,' replied old Wall, stroking his short-cropped hair with his hand as he removed his hat; 'but he's a rare good un along of horses; never seed a better; and I thought, maybe, as he knows the place in and out so well, he was less dangerous within these walls than outside them.'

'There is some truth in that,' I answered; 'but we must get rid of him some way, and yet prevent him from doing us any mischief to boot.'

'Easier said nor done, sir,' answered the trainer. 'Mind, I don't know anything the lad has been up to, but I have my suspicions.'

'Mine are not only suspicions, but certainties,' I said, as, taking out the note I had picked up in the railway carriage, I handed it to the old man, telling him at the same time where I had found it, and bidding him read it carefully through. This he did, taking several moments to arrive at its contents, and scratching his head vehemently in his excitement as he did so. At length he seemed to have mastered its meaning and purport, for, dashing his fist heavily on the table, he exclaimed, with rather a violent exclamation—

'What a set of villains. How I wish I had un here at this moment.'

'Then you think, with me,' I said, 'that The Fly here alluded to is our horse, Dragon Fly, do you not? and that there is some plot hatching, by means of which these blackguards may get at him, and make him safe from winning the race, either by physic, poison, or some other means?'

'That's it, sir, you may depend,' he answered. 'But who is his Grace? I can't make that part of the letter out no how.'

'Oh!' I replied, 'that, I think, is sufficiently clear; his Grace is a nickname for your villainous-looking stable-boy, Billy Dukes, derived from his titled surname, your Grace being the mode of addressing ducal members of the peerage.'

'Oh! I sees now, sir,' said the trainer, with a broad grin on his wrinkled old face. 'Well, you be mighty 'cute to find all this out, surely.'

'But, now,' I said, 'what on earth is to be done?' And we looked blankly at one another for a few moments. As Wall, however, seemed utterly at a loss for a reply, I ventured to give birth to an idea which had been working in my brain ever since I had been struck with the strong general likeness of Dragon Fly's half-brother to that noble steed himself, an idea that appeared to me to be, if properly carried out, the only chance—a desperate one, to be sure—which we had of averting the machinations which were being directed against our favourite for the Cambridgeshire. 'I do not imagine,' I said, 'that, knowing, as that young gaol-bird Billy Dukes does, every hole and corner of this place, we could possibly keep out the ruffians who are anxious to physic our horse; for he can, doubtless, both show the way in, and be ready to assist them, if necessary, at the job besides. Nor do I altogether fancy sitting up, watching for their coming, and trying to take them prisoners in the very act, for two reasons: firstly, because we might be too late to save our horse; and, secondly, we should then only punish, perhaps, the least guilty in this affair, whilst the real instigators of the crime escaped scot free. No, I would rather, on this occasion, oppose cunning to cunning,

if possible, and meet craft with craft; for, by no doing, I think, with anything like care and luck, we might teach the scoundrels a lesson (which they will never forget) through the medium of their pockets, a strong argument with every Englishman. What, therefore, I advise, is this. Having sent Billy Dukes out for an hour or so, under some excuse or other, on the evening before the race, you, Wall, must yourself, unseen by any one, if possible, change the stables of the two horses, Dragon Fly and his half-brother, putting our Cambridgeshire favourite into his brother's stall, and the brother into Dragon Fly's box. The likeness between the two racers is so strong, that, in the hurry of attempting to physic the horse, and by the imperfect light of a dark lantern, which they will be obliged to use, I fancy even that scoundrel Billy Dukes will not perceive the change that has been made; and thus a merely worthless animal will be doctored, whilst our valuable one will be preserved. Moreover,' I continued, 'let the trial you intend to have on Saturday morning take place all the same. Make a great fuss about it before your stable-lads, and pretend to be desperately afraid lest the result of that important event should be witnessed by any one, and thus be made known to the public. This will, in a certain degree, put Billy Dukes off the right scent, and he will, of course, report all that takes place; which will only make Dragon Fly's enemies the more anxious than ever to get at him, and make him safe.'

Old Wall's large, round, owl-like eyes were turned upon me in blank astonishment as I unfolded my plan, and he stared at me in speechless amazement for some moments after I had finished

speaking, unable to utter a word. At last he burst out with—

'Lord, dang my buttons! but you be an oudacious gentleman. To think of a Cambridge scholar a-thinking of such a game as that. Well, I am blowed; but it's mortal good; and if only we can carry un through, why, the race is as good as over.'

'Well,' I said, 'all rests with you, Wall. The plan is very simple, and easily carried out, with anything like due precaution. It will be best, for many reasons, that I should not appear here again until the day of the race. Billy Dukes may think there is something up if he sees us much together. Just mind what you are about; and, depend upon it, all will be well. Good-night. I hear the sound of wheels; and that imp of mischief you have got here shall not find me closeted with his employer, or he may, as the saying is, "smell arat."'

Fortunately I was in time to meet Billy Dukes, as he returned from his errand, before he reached the trainer's cottage; so, shouting to Wall, by way of a blind, that 'I would put the money on as he wished it,' I mounted the vehicle which was waiting for me, and drove off.

As I sped along that excellent road which leads from the little town famous for sporting to its larger sister celebrated for learning, whilst the chill October breeze refreshingly fanned my hot cheeks, flushed and burning with the excitement of my interview with my friend's faithful trainer, I pondered seriously over and over the position in which I found myself placed; but look at the matter in every way I could, there appeared to me no chance of getting out of my difficulties, and saving Reginald Marshman's pocket, but following the plan I had laid down

for old Wall to pursue; and if that worthy is but ordinarily cautious, I muttered to myself as I crossed the Quad, and ascended the staircase to my rooms, on my arrival in college—if he is but ordinarily cautious, all ought to go well. The next few days were to me anything but ones of pleasure. I had determined to keep my own counsel, and not to tell anyone of my friends, at any rate till the race was over, how I had been employed. I had, therefore, no sympathizing ear wherein to pour the anxieties which weighed upon my spirits, or any friendly voice to offer me comfort and advice. To tell the truth, I rather dreaded the chaff which I should have to endure (some of it, perhaps, even reaching the ears of the dons) at the bare idea of a sober scholar of far-famed St. Margaret's, taking charge of a friend's racing-stud, even for a season, and setting his brains to work, to out-plot, and out-manceuvre a set of rogues and legs, instead of solving problems in Euclid and Algebra. On closely studying Reginald Marshman's betting-book (for my knowledge of figures rendered me tolerably *au fait* at that part of my trust), I found matters were much more serious than he had given me to understand, and that having accepted all kinds of bets, and all sorts of odds, he stood to lose, if his horse was beaten, a much larger sum than he himself, perhaps, at all imagined. This fact, it may well be supposed, did not render me less nervous or less anxious about the result of my plan than I had been before. The time which intervened between my first visit to Newmarket, and the day of the race, was indeed to me a period of fear and trembling. I could neither settle down to study, or to the perusal of any lighter kind of literature, nor

could I take part in the sports and pastimes of University life. I wandered about moodily, and alone. My friends rallied me, declaring I was in love; I could neither eat nor sleep; the responsibility of my situation, and the dread lest, by bad management, I should tend farther to embarrass my unfortunate friend, haunted me day and night, like a dreadful 'dream,' wherever I went. At length the dreadful morning arrived, and rather to the astonishment of some of my sporting friends, who looked upon me as a good fellow enough, but a horrid muff, I announced my intention of honouring Newmarket races with my presence that day, craving permission to occupy a vacant seat on the St. Margaret's drag, as the spicy four-in-hand we sent out from that college was termed. I could not endure, such was my anxiety of mind, the burden of my own company, and therefore preferred the gay and noisy throng who crowded our drag, spite of their chaff, to the solitary grandeur of a trap of my own. Immense was the amount of chaff I had to endure, but in the then state of my feelings I think I rather liked it than not. 'Wonders sure will never cease when works of art do so increase,' sang out one; 'only fancy the pale student of St. Margaret's a-going to the races.' 'Oh, fie, for shame,' cried another; 'what will Daddy Doodles'—for by this disrespectful name our erudite and venerable senior tutor was designated by the faster order of undergraduates—'what will Daddy Doodles say at his pet coming out in a sporting character, and going to that naughty, vile place, Newmarket;' whilst a third wag insisted, amidst shouts of laughter, that my mathematical studies had enabled me to square the circle, to find out the philo-

sopher's stone of betting, and that therefore being sure of always winning and never losing, I was all anxiety to go to the races to test my discovery in the ring. 'What shall you back?' they all went on chaffing, as we bowled away towards the scene of the day's amusement. 'Is Dragon Fly'—(they little knew the burden of my thoughts whenever that name was mentioned)—'is Dragon Fly, or Medusa, or the Doctor, your fancy?'

Arrived at Newmarket, we put up at one of the smaller hostels, and feeling cold, and rather shaky about the nerves, I followed some of my hilarious companions to the bar, where I purposed to refresh the inner man with a glass of cherry-brandy. The fair Hebe who presided over the liquor department (we became great friends afterwards, as I have before observed), when I entered the place of glasses, bottles, and noggins, was holding a conversation with a flashy, dark-complexioned, sinister-looking man, who, upon his turning round, I immediately recognized as one of my travelling companions of a few days previous. However, he evidently did not remember that he had ever seen me before, for he stared in an impudent sort of manner, but without any sign of recognition, as I asked for the refreshment I required, and seemed rather to resent my attracting the attention of the pretty barmaid than to be annoyed by any memory of having previously seen me. As I did not wish he of the flashy apparel to stare long enough at me to recall the fact to his mind that we had met before, I swallowed my cherry-brandy and strolled away, asking a very sporting undergraduate whom I knew, and chanced to meet as I came out, who the barmaid's companion might be?

'Oh!' said Grindon, 'that is Dash, one of the ring, keeper of a betting-list in London, and one of the biggest rogues in the kingdom, as I know to my cost; so don't you have anything to do with him, or you'll get the worst of it, that's all.'

'Not very likely,' I said, as I turned away, muttering under my breath; and I fervently trust he may not have had anything to do with my precious charge, the Fly as he calls him.

As the first of the events on the card for that day was about to come off immediately, I determined, as most prudent, not to pay any visit to Wall at the stables, therefore, mounting my hack, I rode off to the Heath. I was in far too anxious a frame of mind, filled with doubts and fears as to the success of my plan, to take much of an interest in the races which preceded the one for the Cambridgeshire stakes. Nor could I find any appetite at all for the very profuse and tempting luncheon our fellows had brought with them, and which was being discussed in the interval previous to the great event of the day. So, swallowing a few glasses of champagne to keep up my spirits, I cantered off in the direction of the stables where Wall had taken up his quarters, to see if I could either meet with or hear anything about the old fellow. I had not ridden far when I espied, at a little distance, a small party coming towards me, and putting up my hand in order that I might see more clearly, I quickly recognized Marshman's trainer (who was leading a horse) as the central figure of the approaching group. I galloped up, almost breathless with fear and excitement, and could hardly gasp out, my heart beat so rapidly, 'Well, Wall, how is Dragon Fly?' The old fellow

merely winked one of his owl-like eyes, as, touching his hat, he said, with the most imperturbable gravity, and with the most stolid air, 'Morning sir, hope I sees you well.' I could have throttled my friend's ancient retainer with the greatest pleasure for not at once putting me out of my misery by answering directly the question I had asked him: but arguing from Wall's manner that all was well, and thinking he might have some good reason for his reticence, I forbore to make any remark. As I rode alongside of the sheeted object of my hopes and fears, now accompanied by two stable boys, the smallest of whom was to steer him in the race, I could not help feeling much reassured by the light springiness of Dragon Fly's step, and the happy careless demeanour of his attendant. Arrived at the saddling enclosure, old Wall led his horse to a quiet and somewhat secluded corner, and, beckoning me to him, drew me aside, and hoarsely whispered in my ear, whilst a look of triumph illumined his features, 'All right, sir, fit to run for a kingdom; you may put your shirt on it if you like. I'd back un for a million.' Whatever old Wall's oracular declaration, 'that I might back un for my shirt' might mean, I had not the most remote conception; but a bright thought did come into my mind that, as it was such a certainty, I might win yet some more money for my impoverished friend by backing, for a farther sum of a hundred pounds, this miraculous animal I had helped to save from such peril. The spirit of gambling broke out with me for the first, and, I am glad to say also, for the last, time in my life. Perhaps it is a disease like the measles, and we must all have it once; but, be that as it may, I have never had any return

of the mania, not even to play at whist for sixpenny points. Reflecting that I had a few hundreds in the world (the whole of my patrimony, in fact) lying in all the dignified security of the 3 per Cents., I determined to speculate upon this occasion with a couple of these hundreds on my own and my friend's behalf. So, galloping back to the ring, to which enclosure Reginald's passport gave me admittance, and pulling out his betting-book, I boldly asked what any one would lay against Dragon Fly? Had that animal been dead and buried, as I daresay his enemies fondly hoped he was, instead of alive, well, and fit to run, as old Wall termed it, for a million, a greater anxiety could not have been displayed to put money on against him. A perfect storm of offers assailed me, and such a jargon of sounds met my ears, as to confuse my head for a moment. I should think every ringman on the Turf, seeing a beardless, verdant-looking, and strange youth amongst the Philistines, asking for the odds against a horse which they evidently considered, if not quite deceased, as good as defunct, thought that now was the time to make a little money. Ten, fifteen, eighteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty, and even forty to one, in fivers, ponies, and monkeys, were all thrown at, and thrust upon me, until I could have booked an enormous fortune had I felt so disposed. Selecting as respectable and substantial-looking an individual as I could find (my selection fortunately turned out satisfactorily) from amidst this betting confraternity, I leaned forward in my saddle, made known to him, as quietly as I could, my wish to back Dragon Fly, and my willingness to accept thirty to one in hundreds twice if he felt disposed to lay it. He looked at

me for a moment with a scrutinizing, searching gaze, as if trying to penetrate my knowledge of Turf matters; and then, apparently satisfied with the result of his inspection of my ingenuous countenance, whipped out a vast ledger, and said, 'I'll put you down six thousand to two hundred. Will that do, sir?'

'Very well, thank you,' I replied, with as cool an air as I could assume; and, recording the bet and name of the layer in my book, I rode off. I arrived just in time to see our horse (on whose turn of speed so much of my old schoolfellow's fortune, and now of my own, depended) come forth, preceded by old Wall (who looked radiant), and guided by the small stable lad (who had now mounted), decked in the smart colours of his racing jacket, bright blue body, and crimson sleeves. I do not pretend, even at this date, to be a judge of horseflesh, either their shape or condition—to me such matters ever have been a sealed book; but no sooner did my eyes at that time fall on the richly-brilliant satin of Dragon Fly's bay coat, the hard, knotty-like appearance of every muscle as they stood out over his powerful quarters, the fire of his eye, and the quiet good temper he displayed, though surrounded by, what to him must have been, most unwonted sights and sounds, and which might have irritated almost into frenzy even an amiable quadruped—an effect evidently produced upon some of his compeers, for they were rearing, kicking, squealing, and careering about in a most eccentric style. No sooner did I see all this than I felt that, at any rate, if our pet did not win, he would be beaten on his own merits, and that no plot to do him harm had succeeded against him.

After following our horse to the

starting-point, I galloped back to the winning-post, and took up my position as nearly opposite to the judge's chair as was permitted, for from that part of the course I rightly concluded I should better see the finish, as it is called, than from any other. The race, in so far as I was concerned, was a mere confused rush of horses, of cries, 'Jupiter wins!—no, Medusa leads!—Placeman wins!—The Doctor wins, The Doctor wins!—Blue wins!—No, Orange!—No, Black,' and other shouts, as each man's favourite seemed to have a chance in the race. A pair of stentorian lungs close by my side literally yelled forth, with a plentiful admixture of oaths of the most awful nature, 'The Fly wins! The Fly wins!' I moved round for a moment, and found that my travelling companion of the flashy clothes was beside me, pale as death, gnashing his teeth, and cursing as I never heard a man curse before or since; when I again turned my head to the course Dragon Fly's number was conspicuous on the judge's board as the winner, and the victory was ours. Old Wall and a verdant undergraduate of St. Margaret's had checkmated a set of legs and blackguards accustomed to roguery from their youth up. It must be confessed the odds were rather long against us at one time, but how completely we had won the game, the face of rage, disappointment, and hate, at my side, told but too plainly. Old Wall, when I rejoined him after all was over, was nearly beside himself with delight.

'Dang it, sir,' he said, with a broad grin on his wrinkled face—'dang it, sir,' but that was an artful dodge o' yours, the artfullest I ever know'd. Why, the rascals, for I watched un, you may depend, came at it on that very Monday night, and that young



gallows bird, Billy Dukes, let un in. How I did chuckle and laugh, fit to bust my sides, all the time they were in the stable physicking poor Jumper, though I was mortally afraid Billy would find it all out. He is such a 'cute un. My wigs! but they did give the poor beast a penn'orth, and no mistake. I ain't certain the horse will get over it. They shoved so much laudiney into un. Eh, sir, but you heard un in the ring a-betting against the horse? Why, they thought he was dead, to a moral.'

'But how did you get rid of Billy Dukes?' I asked, with some curiosity.

'Oh, that was the capitallest thing of all,' exclaimed the old man. 'The young villain asked me for leave to go out for an hour just as it was getting dark on Monday night. I guessed what he was at, but I precious soon gave un permission; and I've never seen un since, except for a moment when he showed the way into the stable. Blowed if he ain't gone clean off, a-taking with un my best top-coat, a whip, five sovereigns in gold he got out of my desk, and my father's old silver watch; but he be quite welcome to un now, that he be.'

But, to cut a long story short, Reginald Marshman soon recovered from his accident; and, after gathering in as many of his bets as made a very handsome amount of cash, though some of his debtors were defaulters, as may be expected, he sold his racing stud, together with the now-famous Dragon Fly, for a considerable sum of money; nor has he or his friend ever speculated upon the Turf since. I decline to say what

became of my winnings, which my friend steadfastly refused to consider his own, though I pressed him much to do so. In passing, however, I may observe that my sister's fortune on her marriage, a few months after the events I have been relating, was from four to five thousand pounds, although she only inherited a few hundreds from our father. I was very much amused at the looks of wonder and astonishment—nay, the almost awe, with which my friends listened to the story of my adventures, retailed for their edification at a large supper party given to celebrate Dragon Fly's victory, and, on his recovery, my friend Marshman's visit to me at the University. That a reading man, a sap, a slow like myself, should come out in such sporting colours it really was, as good Domine Sampson expressed it, 'Prodigious!' Our good old tutor, Daddy Doodles, as he was nicknamed, who heard through some channel of my exploit, sent for me to demand an explanation; and, upon my giving him full details of what I had done, and my reasons for doing it, he said, very naively, 'Pray, my dear sir, do not do so again; but I am very glad you managed to disappoint those scoundrels.' The Dash betting-offices in London shut up after the Cambridgeshire victory, nor was Mr. Dash ever seen in England again. I suppose at that time I must have been bitten with a liking for the breezy Heath, for, although I never ventured another shilling in the ring, I am bound to confess my first was not quite my last visit to the sporting little town of Newmarket.

## AN OCTAVE OF FRIENDS.

BY E. LYNN LINTON.

## V.

## THE MUSTELAS.

IT is a privilege to visit the Mustelas. They understand it so themselves, and make you know that they do. For the Mustelas are people who receive only the absolutely flawless into their acquaintance, and hold no relations with the sinful, the indiscreet, or even the unlucky. Their society, they say, must be pure and not contaminated by the admixture of doubtful elements. Hence, their friendship is, as it were, a seal on the character of any one they affect; and you are assumed to be 'all right' if you are met at the Mustelas. Patronized by them, no one can possibly object to you; for they are so very particular, they would not countenance you for a moment if you were shaky in any way.

To be sure, odd stories concerning themselves are afloat—stories which I do not like to detail at length; for who can say whether they are true or not? But what was that about Mustela and the little governess, and Mrs. Mustela's extraordinary complaisance, ever so many years ago? And indeed, did not Mrs. Mustela do something queer on her own account? Did she not run away from school? or deceive her parents about her marriage? or do something hazy, and that will not quite bear the light of day, since her marriage? I have a vague kind of idea that, as all is not gold that glitters in the material world, so all is not so impeccable

as it seems in the moral. All that is past now, however; and Mrs. Mustela is the rigid demander of absolute faultlessness in her friends, and the rigid denouncer of those famous peaches to which the younger Dumas introduced the world—at five sous each.

In their zeal for moral perfection the Mustelas are perhaps rather too apt to believe evil of others. You see, being so sensitive as they are about straight lines, they are keener sighted than most others in the matter of crookedness. The consequence of which is that, let the most absurd reports be set afloat concerning you, and the Mustelas are the first to look grave and to insist on a full explanation. And as we all know that to live down ill-natured reports by steadfast bearing and a certain lofty ignoring them, is often times better policy than to make a stir about them, and confront and confute them, the Mustelas simply bound you on to your destruction. It may be valiant, but is it wise to take by the horns the raging bull bellowing at you like an angry Jove, yet who is unable to hurt you so long as you keep your own side of the hedge and let him alone? But this is substantially what the Mustelas require you to do, if you are their friend. If any slander is thrown out against you, you must 'meet it;' and call heaven and earth to witness that you are innocent; and demand your slanderer's authority;

and set your whole society in a flame, and every tongue wagging; and so dig the thing into people's minds, when, if you had but gone your own way and held your tongue and never minded, it would have passed like yesterday's cloud, and been forgotten as soon. Being, however, the friend of the Mustelas, you are bound to leap the fence and take the bull by the horns; and if you do not, they cut you, and tell their friends that they are sure you cannot stand a scrutiny, and that you have certainly done something very shameful which you are aware will be found out if you call attention to yourself on that particular matter.

Once they cut me because I was connected with a certain publication, the literary tone of which they disliked; and I would not, being bound in honour to silence, disclaim the authorship of one or two specific articles at which they had taken offence. As it happened, I had not written the papers in question; but the credit of them was enough for the Mustelas, and double-locked the house door against me for many a month. It opened again only when I wrote the play which set all the town agog, and carried my name in blue and green letters a foot high through every railway station in England. And the Mustelas like to have as their friends people whose names are written in blue and green letters a foot high, and placarded against the walls as celebrities.

This zeal for the absolute purity and impeccability of their friends extends itself to their friends' friends, and still more remote relations. You were seen with the Golightlys, were you? The Mustelas wait on you in solemn conclave, and put it to you with affected earnestness, how can you expect to know them, the spotless

Mustelas, when you know the doubtful Golightlys? They are very sorry, they say, but the man who can be seen with Captain Golightly is not the man they would care to associate with; and he who can give his arm to Mrs. Golightly is not fit to shake hands with their daughters. They feel it incumbent on them to decline all further intercourse with you, unless you will consent to purge your visiting list according to their directions. Some one must keep a high standard they say, and they assume to themselves that lofty office.

I can scarcely reconcile their assumptions with their practice; and when I see them hand in glove with the Honourable Mr. Flashband, I confess I am puzzled, and wonder what they have done with their winnowing machine in this instance, and why they have laid it aside on his behalf. For the Honourable Mr. Flashband is notorious enough in his way—and that way is not a very honourable one. But then he is wealthy; and John Luckless, another of my taboo'd friends—whose feet, by the way, have never strayed so deep into the mire as Flashband's—is poor; and say what we will, money does gild the iniquities of the aristocracy, while poverty and rags make the slips of the vulgar very shameful things! I see them, too, a good deal about with Lady Loosely—a woman I, for one, would not care to know; and I am no prude; but then, to be sure, Lady Loosely is a grand lady, and can introduce them to the best society, for all that she is a painted harriidan, who, but for her title, would be shunned like grim death; whereas pretty little Mrs. Golightly is socially no better than a nobody, with nothing much worse to be laid to her charge than a flirting manner, and a pair

of big black eyes, with which, I confess, she makes too much play. No one has dared even to hint such scandal of the pretty little goose as has been publicly bandied about from club to club of my Lady Loosely; but the Mustelas draw away their skirts from the contaminating contact of the one, and live in the pocket of the other.

There were never better friends to me than were, at one time, the Mustelas. That was in my palmy days, before I married and came to grief. I can never forget the kindness they showed me then; the generosity with which they opened their house to me, or the maternal interest Mrs. Mustela used to take in me. They have never been quite cordial to my wife. They say they are disappointed that I did not make a better choice; and resent her want of fortune and plain middle-class extraction. And I know they hinted that I had not behaved quite well to Miss Nora, Mustelas' niece, who lived with them in those days; though I had no more thought of making love to the girl than I had of marrying her maid; and never spoke half-a-dozen words to her that I can remember. When I lost so heavily by the Agra bank, I was severely exercised by my prosperity-loving friends, who lectured me for a whole afternoon on the sinful folly of holding bank shares—that failed. They did not invite me, I remember, for many months after. As I kept my house and did not come to public grief, they saw I was not so hardly hit as they had feared; and by degrees relaxed into their old ways. But when John Luckless turned up again, and I befriended him as usual, and burnt my fingers in putting out his fire, they were again very irate; and when I had to let my

house and go into a smaller one at the extreme limits of St. John's Wood, they wrote to me, expressing a certain kind of Christian sorrow for my misfortunes; but, feeling it a duty they owed themselves and their children, they said, to keep their society pure, they were, therefore, compelled to renounce my acquaintance. My evident want of a high moral standard in associating with such people as the Golightlys, and that Mr. Luckless, and my criminal imprudence in speculating beyond my means, had, they confessed it with great reluctance, changed their former good opinion of me; and they were forced to add, with great regret, that I had fallen below their esteem. So that account was closed; and when I met them in the park the next day—they cut me.

Lately my wife's godfather died, and left me, most unexpectedly, the whole of his handsome fortune. I met the Mustelas the week after the news got wind. They came up to me more cordially than ever; and Mrs. Mustela said in her maternal voice—she has many voices—that 'really they had felt my estrangement from them so painfully they must put an end to it, and I must positively go to them the same as ever.' Then they asked after my 'dear wife,' and praised her beauty and amiability as vehemently as Amy Silver-tongue would have done; and so, left me, overwhelmed with their affectionate warmth. I think however, I shall not go to their house in spite of their kindness. You see they adopt one only because of one's circumstances, not because of oneself; and though I am by no means so Utopian as to think we can be independent of material conditions, yet I do not care to be accepted or discarded merely because I am prosperous or

the reverse; and as it was they themselves who made the coolness between us, I think I will let it stand as it is, and not attempt anything like intimacy again.

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VI.

JOHN LUCKLESS.

Take him all round, John Luckless is the most unfortunate fellow in the world. Nothing prospers with him, and Fate seems to have set a cross against every one of his undertakings. He is, of all my friends, the most disastrous and the most lovable. He is always coming to grief somehow, and half the time of all his friends is taken up in trying to pull him through his difficulties. Sometimes he has to be bailed out of the lock-up, because he got into a row by defending a poor woman against a brute of a husband—and defending her a little too vigorously; sometimes the brokers have to be bought out, because he must needs put his name to a bit of paper for a friend, to find himself left with the liability attached; but whatever it may be, there is always disaster impending. So his friends have to shore up and stave off, else the whole shaky fabric of poor John's fortunes would fall to the ground, and that which is bad enough now in all conscience, become infinitely worse.

And he has the worst luck of any man I ever knew. Every peccadillo that he has ever committed—things which with other fellows would never have got wind—is known and blazed abroad. It seems as if he lives in a glass house which is the mark for all the stone-throwing of the county. His career is a marvel of misfortune. Everything he touches crumbles under his hand. His shares are bought at a premium,

and sold at discount. He never yet had a situation that he kept longer than two months; and do what you will to set him on his feet, he is sure to come tumbling to the ground, with his head in the dust, before you have done with him. Not always by fault; chiefly by ill-luck. He is born to misfortunes, he says, as some are born to silver spoons; and he cannot escape his doom.

The most disastrous thing about him is that fringe of hungry hangers-on whom he has not the heart to shake off, and who absolutely eat him up. They are either old friends to whom he feels bound by length of acquaintanceship, relations by blood, or connections by marriage, who, while he has a shilling in his purse, are generously willing to accept sixpence. So that to know John Luckless is to be drafted into an army of harpies, who suck one's blood and damage one's reputation even more than he himself does. And yet in this very fringe, disastrous as it is, lies the secret of his loveliness, if also the cause of his bane. The most generous fellow in the world, one cannot but admire his unselfishness, even when one deploras its effects: and suffers from them. What can you say to a man, who, with a fine flush on his cheek, tells you, with moist eyes and in a husky voice, that, so long as he has a loaf, his cousin Mary Jane shall have her slice—for can he ever forget her kindness to his poor dear wife when she was supposed to be dying? And how can he turn that old father-in-law of his out of doors now, after having kept him all these years? If you hint to him that Mary Jane is a strong, capable woman, able to earn her own loaf, with butter to it, if she would but shake off her sloth and put her shoulder to the wheel with a will; and that his

wife's father has sons of his own, far better able to support him than is he, John Luckless, you hurt him, and he complains pathetically that you take advantage of his obligations to you, and—well! he did not expect that *you* would have looked at things in this worldly light! From *you* he had expected sympathy, a higher feeling—and a loan. So you put your hand in your pocket for the twentieth time; and for the twentieth time commit an immoral action in the name of virtue. You take from your own and the deserving, that you may support Mary Jane in sloth, relieve old Snail's sons of their obligations, bolster up John himself in a fatal system, and support an army of harpies and a fringe of leeches which it is your duty to discountenance and destroy.

It is almost impossible to do John Luckless any permanent good. No slavish business suits him, for he is a man of a free artistic spirit; and the pity of it is that every business seems to him more slavish than not. Either the head man in the office is a ruffian, or the kind of work is degrading, or some pressing human duty which he would have been a brute and a snob to have neglected for such a base thing as business, took him off one day without leave, and so cost him his place. However it comes about, it is sure to come about somehow, before long; and the upshot of one's trouble in getting him into a valuable situation is an ignominious dismissal for some dereliction of duty committed on high ethical principles.

John Luckless is bitten with the mania of speculation. Long years of patient work, of strict economy, and the judicious investment of margins, which are the methods whereby others provide good days for themselves, are to him mean-spirited drudgery; con-

sequently, he no sooner gets a few pounds together than he places them all on a bright-looking bubble; and loses to the last farthing. He is as unlucky, too, in his family as in everything else. His wife either fails in health, or goes off with a dragoon, or fulfils the alcoholic destiny of women who want 'tone,' and justifies the 'Saturday' and the 'Lancet.' Anyhow, she is no help to him. The children, too—of whom there is a goodly tribe—are sickly; and otherwise unsatisfactory. They have more measles and scarlet fever and whooping-cough than any one else; and one or two of them are 'afflicted,' for John's mantle of misfortune is an heirloom, and has descended on his offspring. Put to school by friendly patrons, they have to come home again before they have been there three months: they cannot bear the work, or the place disagrees with them. Given the means of one profession, and they are sure to develop quite opposite tastes, and either get their indentures cancelled, or, so soon as they are free, render all their previous training of no avail; as, when young John who had been educated for a solicitor, took to painting as soon as he was out of his time; and Sam, who had been put to college and was promised a snug little living in Cumberland, 'made tracks' for the Gold Fields, and utilized his classics by anathematizing his bad luck in quartz and cradles in limping hexameters.

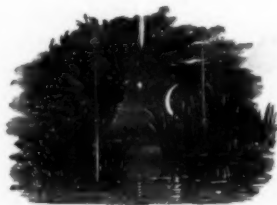
One of the unfathomable mysteries connected with the family is, how they live at all, pressed up as they are in a small house not half big enough for them, and not a quarter furnished. And they are slow in moving off. The persistent ill-luck that has always accompanied them has taken the energy out of them; and when other lads would be out in the



world doing for themselves, the Luckless boys are hanging about at home, waiting, like Micawber, for something to turn up. At last they thin themselves out, and then you would think, the pressure being lightened, John's sun would shine at last. Not a bit of it. Either his characteristic ill-luck weighs on him more heavily than before, and Fortune is still more cruel than she was, or approaching age has quenched his never too superabundant energy, or probably his children are as unlucky as himself, and so are drains to, not feeders of, his scanty channels. Whatever the cause, the result is invariably the same: John Luckless is still the unresisting victim of a malignant fate; and if you would not see the man starve before your eyes, you must still subsidize him generously, and still bear your share of his burdens for the sake of Christian charity and Auld Lang Syne.

And your share is a large one. For, what with improvidence and ill-luck, generosity and weakness, the kindly follies of the man,

and his damaging virtues, his life is one long series of misfortunes, and by consequence his friendship is a disaster to all who undertake it. I know no man so good, so affectionate, who has done everybody he loves so much harm. To myself he has been a plague-spot from first to last, in means and in repute. The worst social troubles I have ever been in have come to me through sticking to Luckless in some of his catastrophes, whereby I got splashed with the mud with which he had unwittingly covered himself; while as for the money he has cost me—don't let me speak of it! If only it had done good! But the worst of it is, it was just like pouring water on sand; it all sank away, and not even a bit of green-looking weed or lichen sprang up as my reward. And yet I love old John; and nothing shall make me less to him than I have ever been; and between the Mustelas and John—prosperity without heart, and misfortune with love—I choose the latter, and stick to my choice.



## THE PICCADILLY PAPERS.

## LITERARY NOOKS.

I THINK it is always an interesting point to determine the *habitat* of a great writer, to compare the writings with the surroundings, to see how the author has reproduced the scenery and how the scenery has affected the writer. I have even met with distinguished Germans, who have said that, given the external circumstances that act upon a man, you may tell his cast of mind and character. This is a good example of the German passion for theorizing, building up an immense superstructure upon a slender basis. We like to think of our writers of pleasant fiction writing under pleasant circumstances. So Dickens wrote in his Swiss *chalet*, and Lord Lytton in the summer-house on the margin of his lake. We can very well imagine how Thackeray's notes were made, if not written out; in lodgings, in cabs, in boarding-houses, in his bed-room after heavy dinner parties, in the writing-rooms of clubs, and so on. The late Mr. Lever, whose loss we all sincerely deplore, left the track of his travels on all his writings. As an Irish surgeon he gave us rollicking Irish stories, and when he went abroad he took his readers abroad with him. His political friends sent him to Spezzia and Trieste, much as Shiel was sent to Florence, or Mr. Hannay to Barcelona. Then he gave us the scenery of Northern Italy and of the shores of the Adriatic. So, too, Mr. Trollope utilised all his travels for the Post-office in that long series of stories, which, on

the whole, have quite a cosmopolitan character. Poor Lever was moving about London only a few months ago as blithe and fresh looking as ever, though we now know that for him health and happiness were both gone. He had lost his wife, and his doctors had told him he was hopelessly diseased. From first to last how bright and boyish was his nature, and how he loved to delineate boyish nature! And what a patriotic nature was his, from first to last trying to make Ireland understood, and to render her such service as a novelist might render.

The public, doubtless, take a great interest in Mr. Tennyson. A friend of mine was once staying at a country inn where the great man was also putting up. As my friend reclined in an arbour, he was more surprised than gratified by observing that various surreptitious peeps were taken of him by the people of the place, and compliments were freely passed on his magnificent brow, his intellectual eyes, and his wildly poetic hair. My friend was doubtless gratified that his personal qualifications were so liberally recognized, but the feeling must have been modified on learning that such compliments were not intended for him but for the Laureate. I have frequently 'made tracks' by accident upon Mr. Tennyson in pretty scenery, and I find that he always likes retirement. And he must find it hard to get. He was driven by the tourists from his pretty house

near Freshwater; and I remorsefully recollect that, when I had the Tennysonian fever in my youth, I persuaded the gardener to give us some of his flowers, but at the time he was far away in Portugal. And the public follow him to his new home, which I will not indicate. Once I saw an advertisement in the second column of the 'Times,' assuring some imperfectly-educated gentleman that Wordsworth really did live and die at Rydal Mount. And of all pleasant nooks I know there is none lovelier than that of Rydal, between the mountains and the lake. Wordsworth used to wonder what would become of Rydal after his time, and it is perhaps a sad thought that, apparently to the inevitable advertisement all pretty poetic retreats must come at last. There was a study at Rydal, but Wordsworth studied abroad, and on him, if on any, the outward forms of nature left a distinct impress. I remember once forging a long day's work in walking from Keswick to Derwentwater, over mountain and by lake, and at last I came in the solemn twilight to that exquisite retreat, covered with roses, jessamine, and myrtle, and realized at last what was meant by the familiar expression of the *genius loci*.

But let us come back to Mr. Tennyson. Of his early home in Lincolnshire, with its vast dome of illimitable sky, he has not said much. Of the old parsonage he says,

'The three elms, the poplars four,  
That stand before my father's door.'

The other day I went to Clevedon, to which belongs the 'In Memoriam' scenery. Clevedon is now a fashionable and very pretty little watering-place, on 'that broad water of the West,' as Mr. Tennyson calls the Bristol Channel.

I am glad that the modern watering-place has been built away from the old headland where the primitive village reposes, little changed by the lapse of time. Clevedon has an earlier literary association with Coleridge, who made his first home here with his young wife. He loved, and praised, and poetized that home, albeit it was humble enough. How touching are his farewell lines, beginning

'Low was our pretty cot. Our tallest  
rose.'

It is now divided into two labourers' cottages. That lake trio, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, have all their local associations. Close to Coleridge's cottage is Clevedon Court, Sir Arthur Hallam Elton's place. Clevedon is certainly rich in its associations of Coleridge, Tennyson, and the Hallams. In the church are those affecting series of monuments to the members of the Hallam family. First comes Arthur's monument, and the poet tells how the letters slowly glimmer in the moonlight, of its touching inscription; then another mural tablet to the memory of a beloved sister, then another to a second gifted brother, then one to the mother, and, lastly, a few lines to the elder Hallam. The historian's real epitaph is in St. Paul's Cathedral, evidently written either by Dean Milman or Lord Macaulay. The epitaphs breathe one language of the parents' joy in the possession, though so brief, of such children, and a sure trust in a happy meeting again. The interments were intramural, and the actual spots are not indicated. The lines—

'And from thy ashes shall be made  
The violet of thy native land,'

lose their force, and though the lines are true in sense and feeling:—

'The Danube to the Severn gave  
The darkened heart that ceased to  
beat.'

yet one is at a loss to see the exact force of the introduction of the Wye, miles away on the opposite shore; you can hardly observe the outlet beneath the woods. To Clevedon, doubtless, belongs the scenery of the poem:

'Break, break, break  
On thy cold grey crags, O Sea.'

There is the little bay retreating from the channel just below the church, where the fisherman's boy sits and sings in his boat; but 'the haven under the hill' is not so clear, and I imagine that the roadstead below Penarth is indicated, near Cardiff.

Specially interesting are the spots where great designs are commenced or finished. We recollect how Gibbon designed his great work amid the ruins of the Coliseum, and how he took his moonlight walk when he had finished it in his garden at Lausanne. I tried hard at the Hotel Gibbon to realize that famous scene, but an hotel does not easily recall a library. Poor Gibbon! I think of his melancholy sentence: 'Two causes, the failure of hope and the abbreviation of tears, always tinge with a browner shade the evening of life.' It is not always, however, that picturesque scenes are attached to famous moments. I know of two great modern poets who were once taking a walk amid splendid scenery. As they gained the brow of a hill, below which an interminable prospect stretched out, one of them exclaimed, 'It was here, my friend, that the idea of my great poem first occurred to my mind. Where were you when the thought of your epic was first suggested to you?' 'I was under a lamp-post waiting for my sweetheart,' was the somewhat prosaic reply. I imagine that

many a great literary design has been developed among the lamp-posts in the London streets. That library of the British Museum is fertile in many memories. Macaulay had a room there to study. He came up one day in severe weather, being a bronchial subject, and met an astonished friend, who packed him back in a cab. He said he had not come from Holly House in his carriage, to spare the coachman and horses—a lamentable instance of the tyranny in which men are held by coachmen and horses. But London is truly haunted London for those who know the shadows.

The little Norman Isle of Jersey has memories—strangely parallel memories—after the lapse of two centuries. Here came Edward Hyde, Lord Chancellor, Chancellor of England, Chancellor of Human Nature, in want, neglect, and, I am afraid, some natural bad temper, that perverted his political views, to write his 'History of the Great Rebellion.' I have examined his manuscripts at the Bodleian, written in a beautiful Italian hand, and so closely, that one page of manuscript would include many of Mr. Combe's type. Two centuries later—and yet those days to me always seem so near—Victor Hugo came here, a literary exile, playing a narrower part in politics, and a larger one over the imagination. Victor Hugo has a natural affinity, of the widest kind, for human nature, especially Gallic nature. Clarendon affects only its loftier types. He is picturesque, he is even Dantesque. Strafford wears his imperial aspect, Falkland his melancholy smile. We see the frown on the corrugated brow of the Protector, and the laughter on the harsh lineaments of the younger Charles.

Then there are some spots of learned and religious retreat, which

have a peculiar charm, as in the ancient cloisters and embowered shades of our Universities. What Oxonian has not lingered in the long avenue that takes its name from Addison? In the Broad Walk one chiefly thinks of Locke, perhaps the greatest name that Oxford has produced, and for centuries accepted on the Continent as the only exponent of English philosophy. I suppose the Lime Avenue at Trinity College and the Broad Walk at Christ Church might be covered with the compositions dedicated to them. I am fond of that silent pictured solitude, the library of Christ Church; and there, I believe, the present Dean used to go and work, at six o'clock in the morning, at the mighty Lexicon which he was basing upon Passow. I know of another great scholar who used to sit cheerily at his window working away at a great Dictionary, which his University had engaged him to compile. Cambridge, on the whole, is much richer in literary memories than Oxford. I love especially to think of the Lady Margaret's ancient foundation of Christ's College, with the bowling green, the deep swimming-pool, and Milton's mulberry tree. There the grave English Platonists, such as Cudworth, and More, used to walk and meditate. The old tree is propped and stayed, and an offshoot is prosperously flourishing. Was it under this very tree that the Italian lady found Milton sleeping, and gave him the kiss which is said to have haunted him ever after? The Scottish Universities are not equally fruitful in memorials, for the collegiates' buildings, as in Germany, were reserved for the Professors, and not for the carrying out of the mediæval college system. Yet, though, Glasgow University has passed away to a new and finer

site. One regrets these old grounds where Waverley's duel with his false cousin was interrupted by Rob Roy, and where the red-gowned students used to flit at earliest dawn through the lamp-lit courts. When I pass by the buildings of the University of Edinburgh I recall the case of Dugald Stewart and the Literary Society that once really made Edinburgh a modern Athens.

Then there is that old-fashioned parsonage at Bemerton, with its grounds sloping down the river, where Master George Herbert lived, whom Mr. Leighton has painted as a fisherman—on what authority I am not aware, except the tempting contiguity to the stream. Herbert had been Public Orator at Cambridge, and had aspired to be Secretary of State, for he had great friends, and, in especial, he knew Lord Bacon, whose new philosophy he had probably helped to Latinize. My own notion is, that in this sweet retreat, within hearing of the Salisbury chimes, he simply starved himself to death. For Herbert translated the work of Cornaro, the Venetian, who lived on a minute quantity of food, which was weighed out daily, and Herbert probably not only expounded the method, but practised it, which was unsuitable both to our climate and his own constitution. Going into the new church, I saw sundry books, 'presented by George Herbert,' a son of the late Lord Herbert of Lea, and brother to our new young author, the Earl of Pembroke. The old tiny church is not used, but is too precious to be pulled down, herein resembling that equally tiny church of Bonchurch, with its recollections of such men as Sterling and Adama. A very similar set of associations cluster around Hursley. What a beautiful, calm, idyllic life is that por-

trayed by Miss Yonge, of Keble. We seem to go into the woodlands and the pastures, and then to pass into the silent companionship of the library, and except that the ecclesiastical skies are troubled, or some villager threatens to go wrong, there seems hardly a crumpled rose-leaf to disturb that lettered and serene existence. Such a life is possible for very few men, is good for very few. Some of us would not enjoy it, most of us would be incapable of enjoying it. It is only through a deal of hard fighting that we can attain to anything like that peace. Once I went down to Stoke Pogis to realize the 'Elegy.' It was the evening hour; the owl, the ivy, the nearer and distant sounds were all there, as Grey described them. There has been some controversy as to the village churchyard, but I think a visit to Stoke Pogis would almost serve to settle the question. Once I investigated Horton very carefully, induced to do so by Mr. Mosson's noble work. In the Home Park, at Windsor, Herne's oak is blown down and its remains converted into *souvenirs*, but I satisfied myself at Datchet of the spot where Falstaff was nearly smothered, of the scene where Rochester describes the second Charles fishing, and of the islet where Savile brought Izaak Walton to fish, and, doubtless, showed him his superb edition of 'St. Chrysostom.' In the forest you recall the youthful muse of Pope; and if you beat about suburban scenery, go to Chiswick, to Binfield. Indeed, if you will take a boat from Richmond Bridge to where Teddington Lock severs the sweet from the brackish tidal water, you will pass through lovely scenery, crowded with literary associations. All the brilliant company in London come down to look at Mr. Pope's Grotto, except my Lady Mary Wortley

Montagu, who has quarrelled with him and stands aloof; and Johnson visits Owen Cambridge close to the bridge; and a stately company sweep up the avenue of my Lord Dysart's house at Ham; and Thomson skips heated into his boat to catch that fatal cold; and Horace Walpole takes the water from Strawberry Hill to see his much-loved Miss Burnies in their own mimic little castle near the Duke of Buccleuch's villa. Lower down the river, where you go to see our great aquatic races, think not only of the brilliant festivities of those gardens, but of that plain chamber in the Duke of Devonshire's villa, where two great Premiers, Fox and Canning, breathed and slept their last.

I have not exhausted them, but I do not claim much for my *souvenirs*. Probably many of my readers have much more ample. Only I may insist that the habit of having such *souvenirs* is not unuseful. It gives a zest to the visiting of famous localities, if we are able to associate them with literary memories. It helps to take away from authorship its unreal, abstract character; the human interest is heightened; we grow into permanent companionship with great men as we track them in their haunts and resting-places, in their down sitting and uprising. Amid all that is transitory and uncertain, we see the eternal forms of nature amid which they moved. It is much to study great works in a spirit of genuine criticism, more, perhaps, to study them in a spirit of genuine sympathy. And, after all, though criticism may destroy sympathy, sympathy is always helpful, almost essential, to a sound and healthy criticism.

#### TWO NEW WORKS IN HISTORY.

Mr. Freeman sees land at last. His fourth volume of the 'History



of the Norman Conquest' brings us to the death of the Conqueror, and his next and last volume will examine into 'Domesday Book,' and trace the consequences of the Conquest to the time of Edward I. Mr. Freeman is a very busy man. He seems to us mentally to recall Cowley's lines—

'What shall I do to be for ever known,  
And make the age to come my own.'

He has taken up many things, and has laid them down, or at least suspended them. He has intermeddled with politics; he has fought country squires on the hunting question; he has a great love of ecclesiastical matters; he is a great archaeologist, and has told anew his stories of the cathedrals of Llandaff and St. David's; he has written several little books; and an innumerable number of serial articles; he has commenced an immense work on the 'History of Federal Government;' and he has actually nearly completed a really good work on the 'History of the Norman Conquest.\*' And yet, though Mr. Freeman has tried so many lines of literary life, he is by no means Goethe's 'many-sided man.' His is a peculiar order of mind that is only at home in a particular set of studies. He is an archaeologist and an historian. In his own line he is probably cultivated to the highest attainable point of cultivation. His industry is intense, and we can say for him, what we really cannot say for many historians, that his love of truth and accuracy is ever intense. But he has his angles and asperities. He is dogmatic and immensely self-satisfied. He has a tone that is intolerant and rude to those who

are not well posted up in history, and might make errors in dates and places. But, all affectation aside, we may be quite sure that omniscience belongs to none of us. We suspect that a scientific man might subject Mr. Freeman to a searching and very disagreeable cross-examination. We imagine that Mr. Freeman would not come out of it very well. There is a want of roundness about him, an absence of the modern scientific spirit. We believe that Mr. Freeman would break down entirely in certain subjects, but the man who broke him down would have no right to raise a howl of triumph. Mr. Freeman is a master of his own craft, the literary craft. But whether he is really a great historian is a different matter. He has a fondness for anise and cummin which is not propitious. He is the very man to explain the Saxon Chronicle or decipher the Bayeux tapestry. He will wrangle through page after page on trifling matters of names and lands which have not the slightest importance or bearing on the general subject. He will, with wearisome iteration, bring out point after point, insisting that each point is the most important of all. He is rhetorical, even eloquent, but his history is by no means a work of art. Tennyson speaks of his brother-in-law, Professor Lushington, as

'Gentle, wearing all that weight  
Of learning lightly as a flower.'

The very converse to that of Mr. Freeman. He is not particularly gentle, and his learning absolutely crushes him. He cannot afford to part with the least bit of it. He thinks that all his chippings are gold-dust; an opinion in which we find ourselves quite unable to coincide.

We cannot say that the present volume strikes us as giving any

\* 'The History of the Norman Conquest of England.' By E. A. Freeman, M.A. Vol. IV. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press.

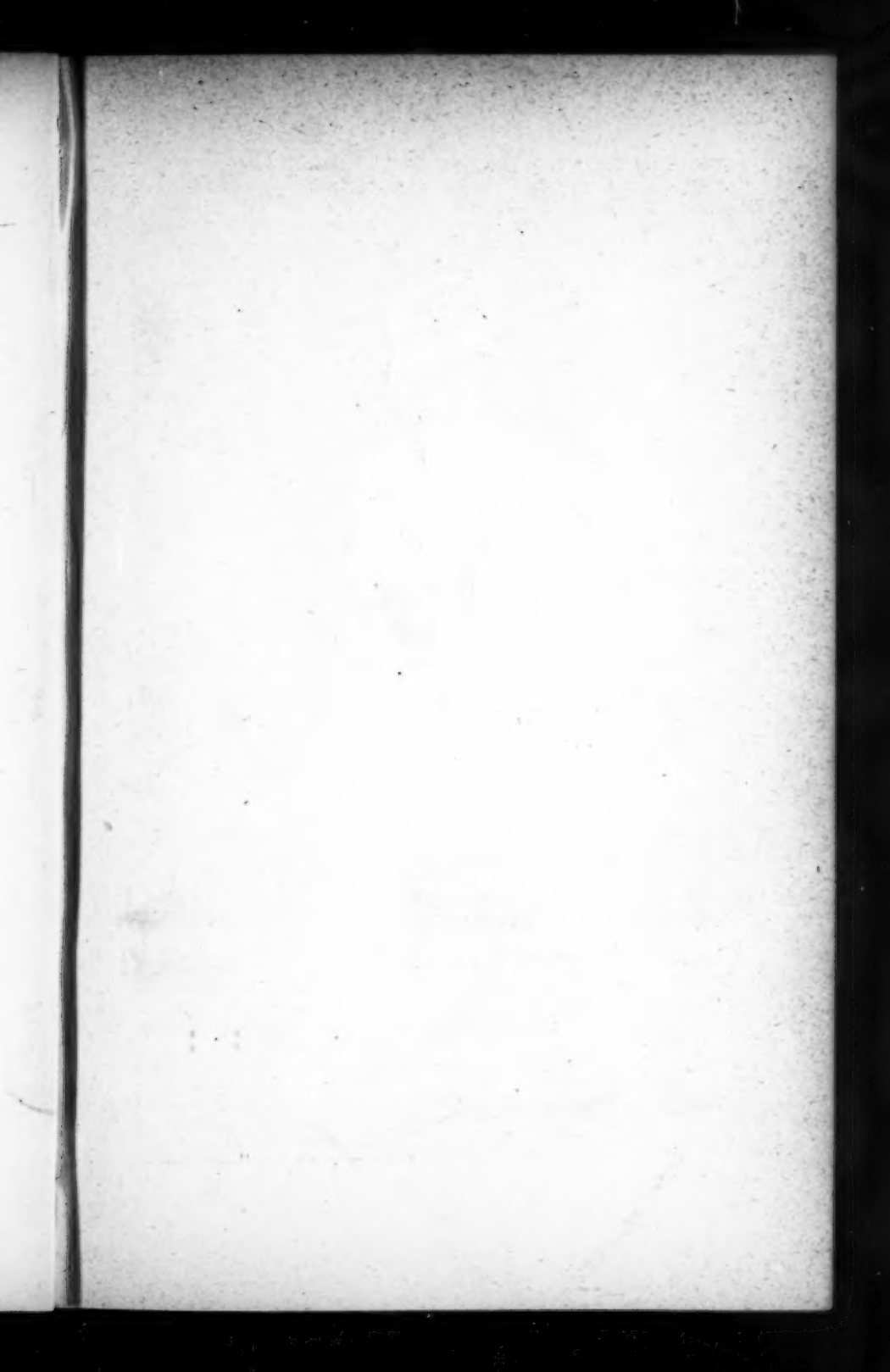
very important additions to the stock of historical knowledge. Mr. Freeman traces the gradual steps by which William becomes a tyrant. He recounts the dark crimes of the harrying of Northumberland, the judicial murder of Waltheof, the creation of the New Forest. Then we see the Nemesis that haunted the later years of William's reign; and as we see the pettiness and vulgar crimes with which they are marked, we are tempted to ask whether William ever was the very great man whom Mr. Freeman represents him to have been. But, after plodding through this immense volume, we own we should have liked to have had the results in a terser way, and are not quite sure whether it was worth while to go through so much to learn so little.

The last matter on which Montalembert was engaged was the perusal of Baron Hübner's *Sixtus the Fifth*;<sup>\*</sup> and we believe the last letter he wrote was to congratulate the author. We are glad to welcome a capital translation of it by Mr. Jerningham, which seems spirited and accurate. It is high time that Gregorio Leti's imaginative work—let us phrase it mildly—should be superseded. Robertson, who wrote the history of a King of Spain and Emperor of Germany without knowing anything about Spanish or German, while quoting a cloud of authorities, was pretty well content to follow Gregorio Leti. We think Baron Hübner is at times very hard on Leti, to whose marvellous stories we must confess an ancient kindness. His account of the severities of Sixtus is hardly over-

charged. The Pope who, before his coronation, put four brothers to death simply for carrying arms into the city with an innocent purpose, who followed it up with the execution of a venerable nobleman for a trivial offence, was cruel and unjust, to whatever degree the State may have required a Reformation. We miss the story of Sixtus beheading the young man who stole a kiss from the Roman lady, and also of sending the camels loaded with poisoned provisions among the banditti, but we have the tragic and authentic story of Vittoria Accoramboni. Yet the Pontiff wept when he heard of the fate of Mary of Scotland. Yet his tears did not prevent him from expressing the warmest admiration for Queen Elizabeth: and on her part Elizabeth used to say that the Pope was the only prince in Europe worthy of her hand. His great career in respect to his policy in Italy, more especially as affecting the banditti; his attitude towards the Reformation and the Catholic reaction; his great works in Rome, more especially in the Obelisk and the bringing of water into the city; his foreign policy and the leagues, are all set forth clearly and fully. The Baron has ransacked the State archives of the Vatican, Simancas, Venice, Paris, Vienna, and Florence, and has thrown a flood of light upon the period. The work strikes us as one of the most valuable that has been produced within recent years, valuable alike for its method and result, for its method in its scientific examination of the authorities, and its results in illustrating a momentous period and a remarkable man who, in his way, was something like Haroun Alraschid.

F. ARNOLD.

\* 'The Life and Times of Sixtus the Fifth.' By Baron Hübner. Translated by Hubert E. A. Jerningham. Longmans.





Drawn by H. Johnson.]

"GOING TO CUT FLOWERS."

(Frontispiece.

# LONDON SOCIETY.

AUGUST, 1872.

## A SIMPLETON.

A Story of the Day.

By CHARLES READE.

[At the Author's particular request this story is not illustrated.]

### CHAPTER I.

A YOUNG lady sat pricking a framed canvas, in the drawing-room of Kent Villa, a mile from Gravesend; she was making, at a cost of time and tinted wool, a chair-cover, admirably unfit to be sat upon—except by some peevish artist, bent on obliterating discordant colours. To do her justice, her mind was not in her work; for she rustled softly with restlessness as she sat, and she rose three times in twenty minutes, and went to the window. Thence she looked down, over a trim, flowery lawn, and long, sloping meadows, on to the silver Thames, alive with steamboats ploughing, white sails bellying, and great ships carrying to and fro the treasures of the globe. From this fair landscape, and epitome of existence, she retired each time with listless disdain; she was waiting for somebody.

Yet she was one of those whom few men care to keep waiting. Rose Ferguson was a dark, but dazzling beauty, with coal-black hair, and glorious dark eyes, that seemed to beam with soul all day long; her eyebrows black, straight, and rather thick, would have

been majestic, and too severe, had the other features followed suit; but her black brows were succeeded by long silky lashes, a sweet oval face, two pouting lips studded with ivory, and an exquisite chin, as feeble as any man could desire in the partner of his bosom. Person—straight, elastic, and rather tall. Mind—nineteen. Accomplishments—numerous; a poor French scholar, a worse German, a worst English, an admirable dancer, an inaccurate musician, a good rider, a bad draughtswoman, a bad hair-dresser, at the mercy of her maid; a hot theologian, knowing nothing, a sorry accountant, no housekeeper, no seamstress, a fair embroidress, a capital geographer, and no cook.

Collectively, viz, mind and body, the girl we kneel to.

This ornamental member of society now glanced at the clock once more, and then glided to the window for the fourth time. She peeped at the side a good while, with superfluous slyness, or shyness, and presently she drew back, blushing crimson; then she peeped again, still more furtively, then retired softly to her frame, and,